

## JULIE.

BY AUGUST BELL.

### CHAPTER I.

It was when sister Ann and I were taking boarders, in a pleasant old house down on South Street, that Julie Parr first came to us for a home. Mrs. Severance and her daughter Edith were boarding with us at that time, and Mrs. Dobell, and that stout old Mr. Morey, and Fred Glover. Fred and Edith represented youth and beauty at our table, Mrs. Severance was an old lady with the most perfect, gracious, lovely manner, Mrs. Dobell was an arch smiling widow of forty, and as for Mr. Morey, he was the bluest, best-natured, most jovial old bachelor you ever saw. We were all getting along as pleasantly as possible together, having quiet cosy times at all our meals and in the evenings, when Julie Parr excited our family circle as a new boarder.

You would have felt interested in her from the first as we did, she seemed so forlorn and so brave, left entirely alone in the world, with but the slenderest little sum, hardly enough for a month's board, to live upon, until she found some remunerative employment. She took one of our small third story rooms that looked like a nun's cell, with its narrow bed and one window, and there she established herself with an appearance of perfect content. She was a graceful little thing, with a bright quick manner, a dark brunette face, and sparkling black eyes.

"I heard her singing while she unpacked her trunk," said Mr. Morey, the day after she came. "I was coming along the hall and her door was open. She made me think of a canary in a cage. I always did feel sorry for canaries."

"I'm sure I'm sorry for her," said Mrs. Dobell, practically. "And if she wants it I can give her some of my sewing to do."

But Julie did not fancy the idea of sewing, it would give her a pain in her side, she said, and she did not want to belong to the great army of broken-down seamstresses. She did make over a dress for Ann, however, and did it beautifully. We allowed her a week's board for it.

She was in hopes she could get a school, she should like to teach, she said.

"That would be a very nice plan, dear," said gentle Mrs. Severance. "Edith, didn't we hear the other day that Miss L—— wanted an assistant?"

"Yes," Edith said, they had certainly heard so, and warmly espousing Julie's cause, she went with her the next day in all the cold and wind, quite to the other side of the city, to Miss L's school, but they were too late, for a teacher had been engaged two weeks before. We were all full of commiseration for Julie Parr that evening at the tea-table when we heard of her disappointment, and Mr. Morey declared it was a shame and an abomination, and if there was a school to be had in the city, she should have it, and if not, he would get up a school for her himself, and send all his nephews, and nieces.

Julie's dark eyes beamed upon him gratefully.

"I never knew Mr. Morey was so devoted to the cause of education before," said Mrs. Dobell, laughing.

But he certainly devoted himself to it then, and for three days he haunted superintendents, trustees, boards and committees, while Julie rewarded him in the evening with canary bird songs. At last he announced success. A vacancy had been found, and Julie could have it, after passing a very simple examination.

"A mere form," he said, seeing her look up a little nervously, "just a few slight questions that you'll make nothing of."

We congratulated Julie, and gave her all our confidence and best wishes as she started out next morning to pass her examination. We talked about it after she was gone, and how fortunate she was in getting settled so soon.

But noon told a different story. Back came poor Julie with a flushed face and downcast eyes. She had failed in her examination, failed utterly! I don't know when I ever was so taken aback. What! failed in grammar, and in the first rules of arithmetic, the very simplest studies of a common education! Mrs. Severance looked utterly bewildered, Mrs. Dobell opened her eyes expressively wide, and Mr. Morey was mortified and surprised, but declared loudly that

there must be some mistake, and that the committees were full of favoritism. Fred Glover laughed, and passed the matter off in a jocose way, saying he didn't believe either he or Mr. Morey could tell the difference between a participle and an adjective, to save their lives.

But meanwhile Miss Parr was still unprovided for.

"Could not she give lessons on the piano?" asked Mrs. Severance, when we talked the matter over that afternoon, Julie being up stairs. "She plays and sings very prettily, I love to hear her, but she doesn't always strike the right notes. I don't really think she should teach music."

"There's my brother wants a lady book-keeper," said Mrs. Dobell, "but of course he must have some one that understands arithmetic, and so Julie Parr wont do."

"Confound it all!" exclaimed Mr. Morey, "are you all going to turn against a pretty young girl like that because she hasn't had the chance of a tiptop education? *I'll* stand by her anyway, through thick and thin!"

Mrs. Dobell colored and looked a little annoyed, I thought. But it came to be a conceded thing among us that our pretty little *protege* need not look for any employment where education or training was required. She must depend upon her natural talents whatever they were. If sister and I had wanted a household companion, she would have been just the one. With a skillful touch here and there, she kept our parlors looking bright and jaunty; she was always pretty as a pink herself, she knew how to make a bow or a flower more effective than diamonds, and she had wonderfully becoming ways of arranging her black hair.

"Put a smart little apron on her," said Mrs. Dobell, "with her hands in the pockets, and let her speak up pert and sharp, and she would be to perfection the French waiting-maid of farce and comedy!"

But I thought Mrs. Dobell was not quite as good-natured as usual when she said that.

Julie was in a perplexity, for something must be done very soon. It really seemed, she declared, as if there was not an opening for even a nursery-governess or a shop-girl, and her dark eyes glanced around pathetically as she spoke. It was hard to refuse her sympathy, and Mr. Morey was so sorry for her that he took her to the theatre two or three times to cheer her up. Fred Glover

fell into a habit, too, of leaning over the piano when she played, and paying her little compliments. If one could only live on compliments!

One evening Edith Severance was going to a wedding. She had engaged a hair-dresser, but he had disappointed her, and at seven o'clock she was still waiting in her dressing-sacque, almost despairing, with her fair hair loose upon her shoulders. The wedding was to be at eight.

"Suppose I try to put up your hair!" said Julie Parr, as the minutes flew apace.

Edith was thankful for any help. Julie went to work, and with quick ready fingers, arranged puffs and curls on the graceful head, choosing instinctively the most becoming mode, and in about ten minutes turned Edith around in triumph for us to admire.

"Why, you might make your fortune dressing hair, Miss Parr," said Mrs. Dobell. "Edith would have had to pay a dollar and a half for what you have done, and I know a great many ladies complain of the scarcity of hair-dressers."

"I'll do it!" said Julie Parr, promptly. "That is, if you will all recommend me, and help me to customers. I'm not afraid but what I can dress hair as well as Monsieur Duval himself."

## CHAPTER II.

WELL, the plan worked. There were plenty of young ladies who were glad to have such deft little hands at their command when an elaborate coiffure was required. Our town was gay that winter, balls, and parties, and sociables came in quick succession, and Julie Parr was in demand. Some of Edith Severance's friends employed her first, and through them she became known in the nicest way possible, so that it came to be considered quite "the thing" to have Miss Parr. There was hardly one of the most elegant carriages in town that had not at one time or another stopped before our door, to take her to the residence of some belle or *debutante*.

It was really like being in the secret of the gay world, like one who can go behind the curtains at a play, and Julie enlivened us very often with choice bits of gossip about her patrons. Fred Glover and Edith Severance went to the parties themselves and saw only the outside of things. It was Julie

who could tell them whether Miss Vernon was as graciously sweet in the *boudoir* as in the ballroom, whether Miss Travers's pen-sive indifference was real, and whether the Mertoun sisters loved each other as much as they appeared to in public. Perhaps she was almost a little too free, sometimes. Mrs. Severance used to look a little alarmed now and then, but she was certainly very amusing. How Mr. Morey would roar and laugh at her anecdotes, but Mrs. Dobell would try to look uninterested and dignified.

"Jane," said sister Ann to me one day, "has it ever struck you that Julie Parr is something of a flirt?"

"Well, no," I answered, "I never thought of her in that light." So then Ann told me that several times lately on coming down stairs a little before breakfast or dinner, she had found Fred Glover and Julie alone in the parlor together, and their manner whenever she looked in upon them was such as to lead her to think they had confidences no one knew of.

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed. "You know every one says that Fred is over head and ears in love with Blanche Mertoun. Edith even thinks there is a secret engagement between them."

"Well, I wish you would just notice," said Ann.

So I took a little pains after that to notice, and sure enough, that very evening I interrupted the pair in a quiet conference in a corner of the hall. And next morning when I went to dust the parlor, I did not hear or see any one, but two shadows on the window curtain stood close together, and I was sure the pair that cast them were just behind. I said nothing, but went on leisurely dusting till the room was done, and then left. But that afternoon I spoke to Julie Parr, for fear some misunderstanding might really arise, and I thought she ought to know about Blanche Mertoun.

"I do know about her," said Julie, unhesitatingly; "I will tell you, Miss Jane, though it is Mr. Glover's secret. I go frequently to dress her hair, you know, and she talks very unreservedly in my presence. He likes to know what she says about him and other gentlemen, and that is why he is always trying to get a chance to talk with me."

Well, that explained it, perhaps, and Julie's reports were no doubt satisfactory, for Fred Glover almost always looked radiant as the sun. This for a time. By-and-by he

did not look so radiant, and the confidential talks increased. I heard Edith Severance tell her mother one day she believed Fred and Blanche Mertoun had had a lover's quarrel, for they only danced once together the night before at the Ware's party, and then had hardly exchanged a word. But Blanche had been among the gayest of the gay all the rest of the evening.

There was to be a large ball a few nights later in the public hall, and for a wonder we were all going, even Ann and I. Not as guests, however, only as lookers-on from the gallery. But we should derive a little reflected glory, Mrs. Dobell said, from Edith and Fred, who would be among the dancers. Julie Parr started off early to go her rounds. She said, laughingly, she had "seventeen heads to do" and by-and-by she would be quite a capitalist.

"Confounded smart little girl, isn't she?" said Mr. Morey, admiringly, as she went out.

Mrs. Dobell had two or three calls to make that afternoon, and when she came in from them she reported the return of Henry Sinclair from South America. We knew the Sinclairs, they were one of our best families. Henry had gone to South America three years before as agent for some enterprising firm, and while there he had undertaken some lucky side-speculations with diamonds, and had absolutely made a fortune. Now he had come home, rich, handsome, young and debonair, ready to settle down, enjoy life and be a good citizen.

Mrs. Dobell had called at the house and seen the young man himself, so she had all the news. He had been improving his time in the two days since his return, he told her, in renewing his old acquaintances, and he was going to the ball this very evening with no less a belle than Miss Blanche Mertoun!

"She has grown into a perfect little sweet blush rose!" he said, enthusiastically, "and is the prettiest girl I've seen in three years. I'm tired of Spanish beauties!"

"I wonder how Fred Glover will like that," I said to Mrs. Dobell when she told me this.

We were all at tea when Julie Parr came home from her round of business, bright and black-eyed as ever, not looking a bit tired.

"Well, what's the news to-night, little gossip?" asked Mr. Morey, jovially.

"Sixteen of my customers were raving about the new arrival, Henry Sinclair," said Julie, demurely.

"Who was the seventeenth?" asked Fred Glover, looking up hopefully.

"Miss Travers. She's just engaged to Mr. Ford, you know, and has eyes and ears for no one else."

Fred was silent after that. The rest of us hurried through our tea so as to begin our preparations to go out, and then Julie Parr ran up stairs to dress Edith's hair, while the rest of us went to our various rooms.

It was about three-quarters of an hour afterwards that I went down into the basement to give some orders. Returning after some delay, I heard voices in the unlighted parlor, and could not help hearing a little as I passed softly by.

"Did she really say she didn't care, Julie?" That was Fred's voice.

"Yes, she said it made no difference to her whether you asked her to dance or not. The only partner she wanted was Harry Sinclair."

"Julie, I won't stand it another day. I'll show her I care as little as she. Come, help me. Go with me to the ball! You're prettier than any of them, and you shall dance every set. We'll divide the glory with Sinclair and his partner!"

I glided swiftly on up stairs and wondered what they would do, but said nothing.

An hour went by. A carriage came for Edith Severance, and after that the rest of us made ready to start in our character of spectators. We assembled in the hall, Mrs. Dobell, Mr. Morey, Ann and I,—but where was Julie? I sent up to tell her we were about to start. Word was brought back that we were not to wait for her, she had made other arrangements and was going with a friend.

Mr. Morey looked really disappointed, but there was nothing to be done about it, so we wended our way to the hall without Miss Parr.

We found good seats in the gallery, where we could watch all the gay throng of dancers and promenaders below. There was Edith Severance going daintily through a quadrille; we espied her first, and then Mrs. Dobell pointed out a radiant little beauty dancing with a tall, bronzed, bearded gentleman.

"There are Henry Sinclair and Blanche Mertoun!" she whispered.

I borrowed her opera-glass and scanned them curiously. It seemed as if they were wonderfully pleased with each other, and I

could see that people were commenting on them. Where was Fred? I turned the glass in every direction, but he was not to be seen.

There followed another quadrille and then a waltz. After that there was a little rest, and the band played promenade music. Suddenly Mrs. Dobell caught my arm.

"There's Fred Glover," she said, "just coming in, and as true as I live, he has Julie Parr with him! How handsome she looks! Did you ever?"

It was Julie, and she looked sparkling and triumphant, her magnificent hair arranged in the most becoming manner; she wore a corn-colored silk—I am sure I had no idea of her possessing such a dress—and lace, and flowers. She was of such a unique brunette style of beauty that she attracted attention at once.

"Well, that beats me!" exclaimed Mr. Morey, in his utter surprise.

We watched them as they joined the promenade. It was amusing to see the curiosity and admiration of the gentlemen, while, on the part of many of the ladies, there was a look of incredulous wonder as they recognized their favorite hair-dresser there in their midst.

The next waltz Fred and Julie danced together. She was an exquisite waltzer, and as they whirled gracefully around, they passed close by Mr. Sinclair and his partner, I saw Blanche Mertoun's cheeks flush at first, and then she grew haughty and dignified, and never appeared to see Fred again, although he passed her a score of times.

When it was supper-time our little party in the gallery grew tired and we left the brilliant scene. There was enough to comment on, in what we had already witnessed.

Fred and Julie vouchsafed us no explanation the next day, and we did not question them, but I had had, of course, my own bit of enlightenment on the subject. One thing was noticeable, when the next party was announced, Julie did not have half so many heads to dress as usual. Evidently she had lost favor.

Henry Sinclair was really in earnest, and Blanche, it would seem, was fickle and impulsive, for a few weeks later the town was ringing with the news of their engagement. Fred Glover had not a word to say, he bore it manfully enough as far as we could see. But something was going to happen, I told Ann, I felt it "in the air," as nervous people say.

It did happen. Fred and Julie walked quietly in to dinner one day, and announced that they were man and wife, having been quietly married about an hour before in a little chapel near by, where a week day service had been held. That was a thunder-bolt for us, and the most romantic thing that ever happened in our boarding-house.

"Julie has been the best friend I ever had," said Fred, as a sort of explanation.

"I love him," said Julie, smartly, "and I'm going to make him happy, and help him save money and get rich!"

"Why, I meant to have proposed to her myself some day when I got ready," said Mr. Morey, in a helpless sort of a way. And then he betook himself to a jeweller's and bought a handsome present for the bride,

which Mrs. Dobell said was unnecessary.

Mr. and Mrs. Glover did not board with us long after that. They went to house-keeping in a small cottage out in the suburbs, and I believe Julie has kept her promise about helping Fred, for he is one of our most prosperous young men to-day. Mrs. Dobell hopes, sarcastically, however, that she don't have anything to do with keeping his accounts!

Henry Sinclair married Blanche Mertoun. I see her driving in her carriage very often, and I wonder sometimes whether she is perfectly content, and whether she would really have jilted Fred Glover, her early love, after all, if there had been no one to stimulate his pride and his suspicions, by reporting her careless chat at her dressing-table.

# JUSTINE.

Shaw, Blanche

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## JUSTINE.

BY BLANCHE SHAW.

"POOR, poor thing! Dead alone, among strangers. Harry, is it not dreadful?" Mrs. St. Dunstan looked at her husband with tears in her blue eyes.

"Yes, Mary, it is very sad for her, but the child's fate is the saddest. Is there nothing by which her friends can be traced?"

"Nothing at all. You remember, Harry, even her name is unknown."

Mr. St. Dunstan looked musingly into the fire.

"Has any provision been made for the child?"

"None. The woman in the next room took her some food, but she refused it, and

still sits, like a statue of despair, by her dead mother. O Harry, it is terrible to see her!"

"Poor child!" said Harry; and picking up his interrupted book, he resumed his reading.

Mrs. St. Dunstan leaned her pretty head on her hand, and by the lines on her brow, one could see she was thinking deeply on a knotty subject. She looked at her husband as if she half expected he would see her trouble, and come to her help; but he, in spite of his interest in the dead stranger, was very deeply interested in his book, and she was obliged to open the subject unassisted.

"Harry!" said she, in a low voice.

He put down the book and looked at her.

She again waited for him to speak, but he only waited in turn for her; and twisting her hands together, she exclaimed:

"What do you think? Would you mind — could we take the child?"

Harry laid the book on the table.

"My dear Mary, taking that child would be assuming a very serious responsibility."

Mary's face fell.

"You object to it."

"No, my dear, I don't object. I share your sympathy for the little orphan, and I am anxious to do all I can to help her. But to take her, Mary, inures upon us a greater responsibility, I fear, than you have thought of."

"How, Harry? If I am able to control and guide a rough boy like Aubury, I ought to be competent to take care of a gentle little girl."

She looked at him with an injured air.

Harry smiled.

"My dear, I was not speaking of your discipline, which every one knows is faultless. I was speaking of the higher moral responsibility which we would be obliged to assume. You say the child's mother seems a lady. If we take the child we take her as our own. We must give her the affection of parents, and try to win a daughter's love in return; and if in the future she should not fulfil our hopes, we must bear with her more patiently and tenderly than if she were our own child. Did you think of all this, Mary?"

Mary was silent a moment, and then said:

"No. But, Harry, I don't see anything very formidable in it. I know we shall love the little thing, and if we do that, all the rest will be easy enough."

"Yes, as long as love lasts, all will be well; but suppose anything should cancel love. What then, Mary?"

"I trust, Harry, I should do my duty."

Harry leaned forward and drew his wife to him.

"Then, darling, the little orphan shall share our home, and be a sister to Aubury. And may Heaven give us wisdom and strength to be faithful to the charge!"

And little Justine was carried from her mother's grave to be a daughter in the St. Dunstan mansion.

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"Justine, draw that curtain, and then arrange my pillows, I am very tired. I do wonder if this day is ever coming to a close."

"Unless the system of revolution is sud-

denly stopped, it is obliged to, mamma," laughed a brown-haired maiden, as she went to the window. "It is a shame, mamma, to shut out this lovely twilight. I wish you would let me bring you to the window to see this glorious sunset. I know it would do you good."

"Do me good when my head is splitting! Child, I wish you would hurry and arrange these pillows. Isn't it most time for Aubury?"

Justine shook up the pillows and looked at the clock.

"It's only half-past five; and he won't be here before seven. Let me bathe your head. It will make you sleep, and then you will be fresh when he comes."

"Fresh! my fresh days are over. But you can bathe my head if you don't think it too much trouble." The last was said in a querulous tone, but Justine, regardless of it, began to bathe her head, and she was soon sleeping.

This little scene took place fourteen years after our story opened, and the friendless little orphan had grown to be a beautiful brown-haired, blue-eyed maiden. They had cast their "bread upon the waters," and not after many days, but at once, had the waves cast back the offering at their feet. Justine was the sunbeam of their home; and when her father died, his last act was to lay his hand in blessing on her head, and commit to her care her mother's failing health. Soon after his death Aubury left home for Europe, and Justine was left to fulfil her duty alone, and nobly she did it. She had idolized her father, and though she loved her mother tenderly, the sacredness of the deathbed charge helped her much to bear with the fretful invalid. Mrs. St. Dunstan slept soundly, and Justine's hand unconsciously ceased its tiresome course, and her thoughts wandered away to the expected Aubury, who was at once the joy and terror of her childhood. Then she remembered that that Aubury was gone forever. Five years had passed since he left them, and those five years had changed the beardless stripling, into what?

A quick sharp ring aroused her from her speculations and Mrs. St. Dunstan from her sleep; and before the latter could calm her nerves the door flew open, and strong manly arms clasped them both in a close embrace. Aubury had arrived.

"Are you perfectly certain that you are the same Justine I left five years ago, and

that I am not the victim of a mistaken identity?" asked Aubury, the next morning, as he and Justine sat over the breakfast-table. Mrs. St. Dunstan never appeared at breakfast. Indeed, it was seldom she got down before dinner; even that, she said, was too great a tax on her strength, but she owed it to her family to be present, at least at that meal, and as long as she could sit upright, she would do it.

Breakfast was nearly over, and Aubury pushed back his cup and looked at Justine admiringly, as he spoke.

"There is not the least room for a doubt on the subject," she replied; "unless I am to be the discoverer and proof of a new state of being, in which it is possible for the spirit, unknown to its possessor, to pass from its first body into another. But, Aubury, since you have first cast doubts, let me say that I trust your proofs of being the son and heir are unimpeachable. Without them your case is hopeless; for although I have watched you closely ever since your return, I have not been able to discover a solitary relic of the boy who made kittens an impossible joy of my childhood."

Aubury laughed.

"That recollection satisfies my scruples. Poor Justy, I was hard on you! Do you hold those martyred felines against me yet? I can't blame you, for you wasted more vitality in those fits of rage and sorrow, than I can ever return to you, unless I should discover the fountain of youth. You had a fierce temper of your own in those days, my little sister. How is it now? Changed for the better, too?"

"I can't say, Aubury, I have had so little use for it lately. But the chances are, that it has gathered force by lying idle; and I don't think it would be wise to tamper with it. I was a little spitfire, wasn't I? Do you remember how mutually enraged we used to get over our relationship? You would repudiate me with scorn, I would protest eloquently, and after every argument failed, I would run after you and shriek 'Brother, brother,' at the top of my voice?"

"Yes, I remember, and I ought to have been well flogged for it. You need not fear a repetition of that offence. By Jove! but I am a lucky fellow, Justy!"

"I've always thought so, my dear brother. But there is mamma's bell for me. I must leave you."

Aubury had been home a week, when a new

actor, in the person of Mr. Fitz Roy Brown, made his appearance on the stage. Mrs. St. Dunstan was occupying her usual place on the sofa, Justine sat beside the centre-table, and Aubury, on a low seat before her, was holding a bright skein of wool, when the door opened and the servant ushered in this gentleman. Mrs. St. Dunstan half rose from the sofa with a pleased smile, Justine bent over her work, while a look of annoyance gathered on her face. Mr. Fitz Roy Brown was a dainty morsel. He was small and slight, with pale brown hair, pale complexion, pale gray eyes, pale, narrow forehead, and a pale green cravat. He walked softly to Mrs. St. Dunstan, and taking her hand, pressed it tenderly.

"My dear madam, I cannot say how happy I am to see you once again."

His voice, also, was low-toned and gentle. He turned to Justine.

"My dear Miss Justine, I congratulate myself on seeing you look so charmingly."

He cast an uncertain look on Aubury, which Mrs. St. Dunstan relieved by saying:

"My son, Mr. Brown."

"My dear Mr. St. Dunstan, most happy to see you."

Aubury put down the wool, and seizing the little pale hand, grasped it so warmly, that poor Brown almost groaned; but he caught his breath, and while the tears stood in his eyes, continued nobly:

"I am delighted to see you in the flesh, Mr. St. Dunstan. Your mother and sister have made me so familiar with your name, that in spirit, I have long known you, and longed for something more substantial."

"Thanks," replied Aubury; "you do me too much honor."

Mr. Brown bowed to Justine.

"May I have the pleasure of holding this for you?"

Aubury picked it up quickly.

"I fear not. My sister is very nervous over her wools. If the skein is not held just right she loses her temper. I won't allow you to risk the danger, Mr. Brown."

"How can you say such unkind things, Mr. St. Dunstan. I beg you won't be angry with him, Miss Justine; but I must say he deserves it."

"Accept my sincere thanks, Mr. Brown, for your intercession, and allow me to add the advice, that you spare your philanthropy. If you continue to shower it so lavishly, the stock may fail some day."

And Aubury resumed his seat, and the wool. Brown walked to the grate and held his hands before it.

"How cheerful a fire always is on a cold night."

Aubury cast a side glance at Justine, who gave all her attention to the wool; and Mrs. St. Dunstan replied:

"Indeed it is, Mr. Brown. Draw that chair up and sit by the grate. You must be quite chilled by your long journey."

"Long! I hope you don't call it long. And yet if it were only half the distance, it would seem long when I turned my steps here."

He looked pensively at Justine.

"Justine, my dear," said Mrs. St. Dunstan, "do put up that wool. One, to see you working so intently, would think that life or death depended upon it."

"Yes, mamma, one minute. I hope Mr. Brown will give me that grace."

"You have but to speak, and Mr. Brown obeys. You know he is your humble slave."

"You forget, Mr. Brown, that I am a republican, and object to slavery on conscientious ground."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Brown. "How witty you are to-night, Miss Justine."

"Is it wit, or contrast?" asked Aubury.

"Wit, of course," he replied, blind to the satire. "Your sister is as remarkable for her wit as her beauty, Mr. St. Dunstan."

Justine flushed under this coarse compliment, and Aubury frowned; but Mrs. St. Dunstan smiled and said:

"Really, Mr. Brown, I must protest against your flattering Justine so; you will turn her head."

"Truth is never flattery, madam."

"And sometimes, not flattering," continued Aubury. "I think you said it was cold to-night, Mr. Brown."

"Yes; quite so."

"Any signs of snow?"

"I did not notice. But I am not at all weatherwise. When weather comes I submit to it; but I never fatigue my brain speculating."

"I believe it. Justy, we are at the end at last. Any more, to-night?"

"Allow me, permit me to say no. Miss Justine, I have not heard you sing for two long dreary weeks; let me lead you to the piano."

"Yes, Justine, do sing something," said her mother.

And Brown risked "throwing the line of direction outside of the base," as he offered her his arm. Justine put up her wool, and submitted to the inevitable. Aubury walked to the grate, and leaning on the mantel, looked at Brown not over amiably, as he turned Justine's music. Mrs. St. Dunstan appeared to be listening languidly; but from under her half-closed lids, she watched all parties with more interest than her nerves often allowed her to indulge in. Justine sang for some time, and when she left the piano Brown made his adieux and departed.

"For heaven's sake, mother, what is that thing?" asked Aubury, as the door closed after him. "I won't ask who he is, for that would admit that he is some one's son; and the possibility of his having parents or any other relatives is not to be thought of. He must be the first of a new species, and heaven grant he may be the last!"

Mrs. St. Dunstan put on her dignity.

"Really, Aubury, you express yourself very forcibly, about a person you know nothing of. Mr. Brown is a very exemplary young man."

"Perish then, forever, all my good resolutions of trying to be one of those things. They were made before I saw a specimen copy. What do you think of him, Justy?"

"I think that when one feels in the humor to be amused by silly things, Mr. Brown is the most delightful little monkey that can be found."

"Good!" laughed Aubury. But Mrs. St. Dunstan said, severely:

"Justine, how often must I tell you it is shocking bad taste for you to use such language?"

"I am sorry, mamma."

"Sorry, indeed! You ought to be sorry! The way you treat Mr. Brown is disgraceful. Most young ladies would at least be thankful for that marked preference of a man of his position, but you treat him as if he were a lackey. You may repent this, one day, ungrateful girl!"

Aubury's brow flushed.

"Heavens, mother! what do you mean? Has that puppy dared to aspire to Justine?"

"I can't see any particular daring about it, Aubury. He is a gentleman of good position, wealth and education; and he is considered a fine match for any girl."

"And you class Justine with 'any girl'?" Ah, mother, I see I have returned none too soon." Justine had come to his side. He

put his arm around, and drew her to him. "Justy, tell me, if that ape dares to annoy you with his attentions, and I'll wring his puny neck for him."

"I think you are both behaving very ridiculously, and have little consideration for my nerves. Justine, give me your arm; I must retire to calm myself." And with the air of a suffering saint, Mrs. St. Dunstan left the room.

All traces of excitement and displeasure had vanished when Mrs. St. Dunstan appeared at luncheon the next day. She was unusually fresh and bright, and Justine playfully said that Aubury had already brought back his mother's roses. Good humor reigned supreme; and conversation flowed on smoothly, till suddenly, Mrs. St. Dunstan asked.

"Aubury, do you remember your cousin Lucille?"

"What, Mademoiselle La Princess De Grey, who used to lounge in dark corners over novels, and be indignant because I wouldn't play 'Ernest Linwood' to her 'Gabrielle'? Of course I remember her. How is she? I suppose she made a brilliant match long ago, and forgot to send me cards."

"No; she is not married yet; though fortunes have been laid at her feet. She is a beautiful woman."

"I believe it, for she was a beautiful school-girl. But what suggested her at this particular minute, mother?"

"I was afraid you would find home dull, with only a nervous invalid and Justine for companions, and I have asked her to spend the winter with us."

"I am much obliged for your solicitude, mother mine, but it was unnecessary. When you are tired of my boorishness, Justy makes herself the best little sister in the world. Her patience never wears out."

"I am sorry you don't like it, Aubury. I thought you would be pleased. It seems I can never do anything right any more."

"You are mistaken, mother. I am obliged. I shall be delighted to see Miss De Grey, and will try to get myself up to even the 'Ernest Linwood' pitch, if she insists upon it. What do you think of it, Justy?"

"I shall be very glad to have Lucille with us."

"Take care, my dear, she is beautiful, and a coquette; she may steal Brown away."

"Fate grant she may."

Mrs. St. Dunstan, intent upon her roll, thought it best not to hear this little dialogue; and they soon left the table. Lucille, with trunks and boxes, arrived in due time, and was welcomed by all the family. She was truly a beautiful woman. Slightly above medium height, her figure was formed with that indolent grace that seemed to fit it for lounging chairs and low cushions. In style she was brunette, with clear-cut slight features, waving hair, colorless complexion, and great dusky eyes. She said but little, and when she did speak, her soft purring voice seemed to come from behind her eyes, rather than from her lips. Such was Lucille De Grey; the only child of Mrs. St. Dunstan's only brother, and the heiress of the De Grey wealth.

It had been proposed that soon after Lucille's arrival a ball should be given at the St. Dunstan mansion, for the double purpose of honoring Aubury's return, and announcing to the world the fact that Justine was "out." Aubury and Justine fought the idea till Lucille came. She greeted it with as much rapture as her indolent nature could express, and of course all opposition ended. The night appointed on the cards of invitation came, and Justine in orthodox white and blue, was presented to "our set." And sweetly pretty she looked, too, contrasting well with Lucille, who was bewildering and gorgeous in crimson satin and black lace. The guests had all arrived, and they waited for the *debutante* to open the ball.

"Justine, my dear," said Mrs. St. Dunstan, approaching her, "Mr. Brown solicits your hand for the first quadrille."

Mr. Brown executed his most alarming bow.

"Justine looked uncertain a moment:

"Why, mamma, I can't! Aubury—"

"Nonsense, child! Aubury is engaged with Lucille. Dance with Mr. Brown."

Justine still hesitated. Brown bobbed and smirked.

"My dear Miss Justine, pray do not refuse me." He put out his elbow dangerously.

Justine cast an appealing look at her mother; it was returned by one of command, and she was just about to put her hand in Brown's arm, when Aubury's voice said:

"I beg pardon, but I have the first right here. Sorry I was so late, Justy, but I had to dispose of Lucille first." And he led her away.

Brown stared blankly after them. Mrs. St. Dunstan's cheek flushed, and a disagreeable light sparkled in her eyes, but in a second she controlled all show of feeling, and took up the task of restoring Brown to consciousness.

We will not linger over the details of the ball. Suffice it to say it was a success; at least, every one said it was. The belleship was divided between Justine and Lucille; and the former went to bed with Strauss's waltzes rather irreverently mingled with her devotions.

"Aubury is certainly very handsome, Aunt Mary," said Lucille, lazily, as she was sitting with her aunt, a few days after the ball. "But don't set your heart upon him. He is too desirable a fish to escape the matrimonial net long. I hope he will make a sensible choice. You must watch him, closely, aunty."

"I hope that Aubury's good sense will keep him from indiscretions."

"Good sense! why, auntie, who ever heard of a man's allowing good sense to have anything to do with that step?" And Lucille laughed a low soft laugh. "No, no," she continued, "good sense can't save Aubury, but he has something else which I think will."

"What is that?"

"Justine."

Mrs. St. Dunstan looked up quickly, as Lucille pronounced the name; but her face was as placid as a moonlit lake.

"Lucille!"

"Well, aunty?"

"Lucille, you have been here two weeks; have you discovered anything?"

Lucille's color rose just a little; but she softly laughed again, and replied:

"Discovered anything! why, aunty, did you bring me here to play detective? You should have told me sooner. Which is it, family plate, or search for wills?"

"Be serious a few minutes, Lucille, for I wish to speak on a serious subject. I trust there may be perfect confidence between us."

"I hope so, aunty."

Mrs. St. Dunstan paused and used her sal volatile energetically. Then she said:

"Have you observed Aubury and Justine closely?"

"Yes, aunty."

"What do you think of them?"

"They are very fond of each other. Aubury is a model brother!"

"A fig for the brother! Lucille De Grey he is in love with her!" Mrs. St. Dunstan hissed the words between her teeth; but Lucille only replied quietly:

"I have thought so some time. It must make you very happy, aunty, Justine will then be your daughter indeed."

"Happy, Lucille! are you crazy? Can you think that I would be happy to see my only son united to a nameless waif? to have his children's blood mingled with a current that may be baser than ditch water? I would rather see him dead!" She paused, but Lucille did not speak, and she continued: "And I have done it all! I set the trap and baited it for him. Blind fool! Before he returned I saw what I had done, and trembled for the consequences. I felt that the long separation would deaden the brotherly love, and make room for a warmer. I did my best to have her married, or at least engaged before his return; but of course she must be perverse. Lucille, never be charitable or sympathetic!"

"I never will. It isn't my style. You know that I never heartily sympathized with your piece of philanthropy. But"—and she shrugged her shoulders—"it can't be undone now!"

Mrs. St. Dunstan leaned towards her.

"It can; and you must do it!"

"I! How, pray?"

"Marry Aubury yourself!"

Lucille actually started, and a deep crimson spread over her face.

"Yes," continued Mrs. St. Dunstan, "that is what I brought you here for. You are handsome and fascinating, and you were always fond of Aubury; pardon me, but I am speaking plainly. You know how to play your game, and if you act your part well, with my help, we will repair the mischief yet."

Mrs. St. Dunstan stopped. The color had all faded from Lucille's face. Her teeth were firmly shut, and her soft eyes actually glittered. She said nothing, and her aunt came to her side.

"You will help me, Lucille! You will save my son and our family from this disgrace. It has always been the darling wish of my heart to call you daughter. Will you not try to grant it?"

Lucille sprang up and walked the floor rapidly for a few minutes; then she stopped:

"I will, aunt. I will use every effort to win him. You are right. I have always

loved him and hated her; but I thought you loved her, and that you wished it, and I locked up both love and hate. Now I am free, and I will win him, or—deserve to lose him!" She threw herself into a chair, and buried her face in her hands, and when, a few minutes later, she lifted it, all traces of her passion were gone. She smiled languidly:

"I was absurdly dramatic, aunty, wasn't I? I shan't indulge again for some time. I think I'll go and see what our doves are doing. They have had such a start, that it is best to lose no more time. Follow me soon, aunty." And she left the room.

Justine and Aubury were in the library arranging some relics of Aubury's wanderings. They did not hear Lucille's catlike step, and she apprized them of her presence by saying:

"Most devoted of brothers, what sacred relics are those? Would it be sacrilege if I were to touch them?"

"Not at all, my fair cousin; it would be an honor far beyond their deserts. Touch and admire, but ask no questions. Some of their histories are too black to be investigated."

"Ask no questions! Aubury, have you forgotten I am a woman? What is this?" She held up a bit, that looked like polished ivory.

"I warn you, halt on the threshold!"

"Never! I will brave the terrors behind the door! What is it?"

"That is the great toe of a bandit-chief, who, after killing numberless people, was at last caught and hanged. His body was quartered, and hung up to dry; and after the birds had picked off the flesh (it did dry, as intended), the bones were distributed around as charms against diseases. I got this from an old peasant woman. I was suffering from a slow fever, and she gave it to me as a great favor, with the solemn assurance that it would cure me, if I wore it constantly around my neck."

"But you didn't do it!"

"Of course I did. That is, I wore it till the old fellow's ghost became so annoying in his demands for his missing member, that I was obliged to lock it in a box and put it in another room to obtain a decent night's sleep. This broke the spell, and I didn't put it on again. Don't look around so nervously, Lucille. He isn't here. The old fellow told me he would never dare to cross the ocean, because he was afraid of sea-sickness. That was the reason he was so anxious to get the toe before I left."

"O Aubury, you are vile! How can you say such horrible things?"

"It is not my fault, mademoiselle. I warned you that investigation would be dangerous. Shall I give you the history of that?" He pointed to a mouldy-looking object.

"No, no, I beg of you! If that fair ivory has such a dark story, I shudder to think of the horrors that may wrap that musty thing. Justine, your taste must be cheerful to enjoy such things. Let her revel in them alone, Aubury, and you come open the organ for me. I must exorcise that ghost with music." And she walked to the instrument.

Lucille played the organ well. Her indolent nature harmonized perfectly with the deep dreaminess of its tone. Aubury loved the organ, and he fully appreciated the beauty of her playing; and she knew that Justine would have the relics to herself, as long as she chose to keep him by the instrument. And for an hour the glorious melodies of Mozart and Handel rolled through the room. Mrs. St. Dunstan did not follow Lucille as requested; better still, she sent for Justine, and they were alone. Lucille threw her whole soul in one deep sobbing chord, and then took her hands from the keys.

"Don't stop!" said Aubury; and he caught her hand in his to detain it.

"Tired! I could listen to that music forever! You play divinely, Lucille."

"Doesn't Justine play?"

"Yes, but not like you. Her musical power lies in her voice."

Lucille drew her fingers over the keys a moment, and then said, absently:

"Is it not strange, that though we often find people of obscure extraction to possess fine voices, they seldom have any talent for instrumental execution."

Aubury looked at her, half puzzled, half indignant.

"What do you mean by that, Lucille?" he asked. "Who is of obscure extraction?"

"I don't say that any one is; but you know Justine's parentage is wrapped in perfect mystery."

Aubury's eyes sparkled unpleasantly.

"Lucille, Justine's history dates from the time she was adopted into this family. Before that, it matters not whether she dwelt in a palace or a hovel; her connection with it is blotted out forever."

Lucille saw at once that she had made a false move, and that she must skirmish bril-

liantly to regain her position. She laughed her low soft laugh.

"What a zealous champion, you are, Aubury. Justine ought to forgive my ill-natured remark for the enthusiasm it awakened. I wonder if you would defend me so gallantly. I fear not."

She turned her great eyes up to him, and he being only a man, felt his wrath cool, and a little nervous flush spread over his forehead, as he replied:

"What reason have you for that silly idea?"

"Is it silly? I hope so; but, Aubury, I have always had an idea that you cared very little for me."

Aubury looked at her curiously. What did all this mean? Was she trying to flirt with him? But there was no sign of coqueting in her face. Her eyes were downcast and her expression was sad.

"Lucille, what a whimsical brain you have. I thought you were too sensible to let such cobwebs grow in it."

"Are they cobwebs, Aubury?"

"Of course they are; brush them down as soon as possible."

"No; you will have to do that."

"I? well, I'll not be long about it; what shall I begin with?"

Lucille looked up and smiled.

"O, something very devoted! Teach me to play chess, as patiently as you did Justine."

"May I never have a heavier task," laughed Aubury, as he raised her hand to his lips.

"O how pretty! Rehearsing for theatricals, or in live earnest?" cried a voice, and Justine stood beside them.

"If done well, in earnest, if botched, rehearsing, of course; which say you, madam eaves-dropper?"

"I can't pass judgment without investigation and reflection, and at present I haven't time for either. Mamma says that the day is so fine she thinks a drive will do her good. I am to go with her in the carriage, and she wishes Lucille and you to go on horseback. Don't be lazy and say no, Lucille; and Aubury, don't feel just like a smoke, for she has ordered the horses, and I was to request speed in your preparations. Come, Aubury, your spurs, sir; and Lucille, your habit and plumes."

"It seems to me, young lady, that you are queening it right royally. I suppose, Lucille, that we poor subjects have naught to do but obey. What say you?"

"A ride will be delightful," replied she relapsing into her indolence. "Let me pass Aubury; I must get ready. Come, Justine."

Half an hour later they were out in the bright sunshine.

Lucille looked well on horseback, and she knew it; and this morning she was looking her best. Her black habit and heavy plumes set off her slight figure and olive complexion perfectly. She looked like an oriental princess who had become a convert to the dress and heresies of the West.

"What a handsome pair they are," said Mrs. St. Dunstan. "O Justine! if all might yet be well between them!"

Justine looked at her.

"Why, mamma, aren't they good friends?"

"Yes, friends; but I fear that is all. Is it possible, Justine, that you have forgotten—but no; it is I who forget—you were too young at the time to notice such things. Aubury has loved Lucille from her childhood; and her rejection of him drove him to Europe."

Justine's eyes opened wide, and she felt a little sick tremor at her heart.

"O mamma, isn't it dreadful?"

"It is dreadful, my child, if she persists in her refusal, for Aubury will never love another woman. But I hope, I trust, she will change. Aubury is so noble, so handsome! It is almost impossible for her not to love him."

Justine looked vacantly at the passers. Suddenly she spoke:

"Mamma, are you sure he loves her yet? Remember how he spoke when you said she was coming?"

"My dear little girl, you are yet a novice in the deceit of life. Do you suppose a man will willingly expose a bleeding wound, even to a mother? No, Justine, the forced lightness with which he spoke told me the flame was burning still. Fate grant that I have not brought them together again in vain."

Justine again looked out of the window. Presently she said:

"Mamma, do you think that Lucille would make him happy?"

"Lucille would make any man she loved happy. It may only be a whim, but, Justine, I have fancied that you do not love Lucille. I hope I am wrong; but if not, for my sake, for Aubury's sake, curb the feeling, and join with me in doing all you can to secure your brother's happiness."

Justine turned from the window.

"Mamma, Aubury's happiness will always be my first and dearest care. If it is as you say, I will love Lucille for his sake."

Suddenly the scene at the organ flashed before her. Her heart grew cold, and she said, wearily:

"Yes, it must be so; he does love her."

She leaned back on the cushions, and a carriage containing some of Mrs. St. Dunstan's friends passing them at that time, the conversation closed. That evening, in a distant corner, Aubury played chess with Lucille, and by the fireside Justine read the last novel to her mother.

The chess lessons continued regularly from that date; but their evenings were so often interrupted, that Lucille proposed to take her instructions during the day; and every morning till luncheon she and Aubury spent over the board. Lucille was a model pupil. The confidence and trust that she displayed in her teacher were beautiful. She would not touch even a pawn without his sanction. Had she been old or ugly, Aubury might have thought her stupid; but as it was, he found that small white hand fluttering over the board, and those great dark eyes full of trust and faith turned up to his, far from disagreeable. He was not in love with her; far from it. He knew she was a heartless flirt, and probably flirting with him; but what man would not be pleased to have a beautiful woman take so much trouble for him? and unconsciously he reflected the tenderness of Lucille's glances. Mrs. St. Dunstan was delighted, and Justine, trying to tell herself that she was glad, sat by her sofa and read to her, or spent her time in her own room.

The season was gay, Justine and Lucille were the leading belles, Mrs. Dunstan's health improved so much that she was able to act as chaperone, and through her encouragement, Mr. Brown became more assiduous in his attentions to Justine, and hovered about her like her shadow. Justine fretted under this, and would have openly rebelled against it, but Lucille had so skillfully monopolized Aubury that he did not notice her annoyance, and her pride and feelings being both hurt by this, she suffered in silence; and soon Mrs. St. Dunstan's intimate friends began to hint their congratulations to her in regard to the brilliant prospects of her children.

The season was near its end, and late hours and the dull ache of her undefined

sorrow began to show on Justine. Her color faded, and the outlines of her face grew sharp. Mrs. St. Dunstan noticed the change, and bade her spend her mornings on her lounge. Justine gladly obeyed, for her spirits were in that state of nervous depression in which companionship is absolutely painful. Aubury and Lucille still played chess, and Justine tried not to think bitterly of them. One morning, as she lay half dreaming, she received a summons to go to her mother. She arose slowly, and obeyed. Mrs. St. Dunstan sat in her chair holding an open letter in her hand. She pointed to a seat when Justine entered, and began looking over the letter. Its contents evidently pleased her, for her face was overflowing with benignity. She read the letter through, and holding it open in her hand, she began:

"Justine, my dear, this morning I received this letter from Mr. Brown. Of course, after his faithful devotion of the past winter, you will not be surprised to learn that it is to request my permission to address you?"

She paused, and Justine leaned by in her chair, looking a trifle paler. Mrs. St. Dunstan held the letter towards her.

"Would you like to read it, dear? It is a delicate manly letter!"

Justine put it away.

"No, no! I do not want to see it! Mamma! mamma! you might have spared me this!" She buried her face in her hands and burst into a passion of tears.

Mrs. St. Dunstan looked at her a moment.

"Justine, what is the meaning of this? I am both shocked and grieved. I can see nothing very terrible in a gentleman's offering you his hand. Politeness demands that you should at least be grateful for the honor!"

Justine raised her head.

"Mamma, I am very grateful to Mr. Brown, but I cannot accept it."

Mrs. St. Dunstan's brows knit, but she kept her temper, and said, quietly:

"Justine, you are a foolish girl, and you are throwing away something you will regret for life. I have seen a great deal of the world and men, and I have never seen a man I would rather give you to, than Mr. Brown. Have my wishes no weight?"

"Yes, mamma, your wishes are everything to me. But I don't want to marry any one. I want to stay with you and Aubury."

"You talk like a child, Justine! Think of my failing health and years; is it prob-

able that I shall be with you much longer? And Aubury! do you think he and Lucille will care to be burdened with a sister?"

"Burdened! I will never be a burden to him. I would toil day and night to serve him."

"Don't talk sentimental nonsense, child! If you wish to prove your affection, respect his wishes and accept Mr. Brown."

The color swept over Justine's cheeks.

"Does Aubury wish me to accept Mr. Brown?"

"Of course he does. He wishes to see you settled in life, and you will never have a better chance than this."

The color fled from Justine's face, and she grew very pale. She looked steadily at Mrs. St. Dunstan, and said in a low hard voice:

"Mamma, you can tell Mr. Brown to come." And without waiting for a reply, she left the room.

She did not return to her apartment, for the servant was cleaning it. Lucille was out; she thought Aubury was with her, and she went into the library. She sat down in a large chair, and then, her forced calmness giving way, she burst into tears. A sound was heard behind her, a quick step crossed the room, and Aubury stood beside her.

"Why, Justy! what is this? what is the matter?"

Justine threw her arms around his neck, and sobbed harder.

Aubury drew her close to him, and smoothed the hair from her temples; and he saw how thin she was; how distinctly the blue veins showed through, and his conscience smote him that this should happen and he not notice it."

"Justy, little sister," said he, tenderly, "tell me what troubles you."

A sudden resolution seized Justine; she raised her head, and asked, earnestly:

"Aubury, do you wish me to marry Mr. Brown?"

"Wish you to marry Mr. Brown! Justine, are you crazy?"

"I don't know," said Justine. "Perhaps I am. He has proposed for me, and mamma says you wish me to marry him." She took her arms from his neck, and leaned back wearily.

Aubury shut his mouth firmly, and the lines around it grew harder.

"Justine," said he, "I do not understand what you have said. It has raised a suspicion, which cannot, must not, be true. But

one thing it has done, for which I thank it; it has told me that I have been making a fool of myself, and that it is time I stopped, Justine." He bent over her again, and his voice was low, "Do you really care for me?"

"Aubury, you know I love you better than the whole world. If you were my own brother—"

"Stop, Justine! I am not your brother, and it is not a brother's love I ask or offer. Justine, will you be my wife?"

The room swam around. Justine grasped the arms of her chair, but she did not speak.

Aubury bent lower.

"One word, my darling. That is the only love I will have. Can you give it?"

And Justine raised her eyes to his and answered, "Yes."

"God bless you, my darling!" And he drew her to his bosom. And neither heard the soft rustle of a dress die away in the hall.

Half an hour later a servant entered the room and handed a letter to Aubury. He opened it and said:

"How unfortunate! A telegram from a friend who is very ill, and wishes me to come to him at once. What shall I do, Justine?"

"Go, of course. When will you have to start?"

Aubury looked at his watch.

"Directly, if I would reach him to-day; and to-morrow might be too late. It is too bad, Justy; but get back some of your roses while I am gone. Say good-by to mother and Lucille; I'll not have time. Heaven protect you, my darling!" And with a kiss Aubury was gone.

Justine went to her room. She did not go to lunch. In her happiness she shrank from meeting any one. She wanted to enjoy it alone, and tell herself over and over that it was real. She felt a little nervous about Lucille, too. Her name had not been mentioned by Aubury or herself. She knew that Lucille had no heart to break; but her vanity would be deeply wounded, and Justine, in her happiness, pitied her, and dreaded to meet her, fearing that she would read her secret from her face. Poor Innocence! Lucille had the secret already, by a far less honorable means. The day passed away, and night began to fall. A knock sounded on the door, and then Mrs. St. Dunstan entered. Justine sat at the window, her morning-dress unchanged. Mrs. St. Dunstan looked pale, but she smiled and said:

"I came to tell you to wear your blue poplin, Justine. Mr. Brown admires you very much in that."

Justine started up.—"Mr. Brown?" For the last few hours Brown had been an unknown quantity in her mind. Now she remembered her consent of the morning, and that to cancel it she must tell her mother her promise to Aubury. She tried to speak, but the words stuck fast in her throat, and Mrs. St. Dunstan continued:

"Yes, Mr. Brown! you speak as if you had never heard the name. He will be here this evening to formally address you."

Justine made a desperate effort:

"Mamma, I am so sorry! I cannot see him! I have promised to marry Aubury!"

A deep flush dyed her cheeks as she spoke, and she looked pleadingly through the gloom at Mrs. St. Dunstan.

For a moment the gaze of those pure young eyes checked the words that rose to Mrs. St. Dunstan's lips. Beyond them, through the mists of the past, she saw the grave eyes of her husband look on her with sad reproach. She heard the loved voice say, "We must give her a daughter's love;" and like the cry of an avenging angel, came her answer, "Harry, I shall do my duty." But only a moment did memory plead for Justine. Pride and ambition had made its power very weak. Turning a look of hate upon the girl, she burst out:

"And is this the return I am to have for all my kindness? for the years that I have cared for you and saved you from a pauper's lot? Do not think that I am surprised, I have long seen your arts; but I trusted that Aubury's sense and pride would save him from them. But he was no match for your low cunning. Fool that I was, to think I could turn mud into snow. But you shall not marry him! My blood shall never mingle with the base tide that fills your veins! No! I would rather see him in his coffin!"

Justine put her hands before her eyes, and uttered a low cry:

"Don't! don't, mamma! you will kill me!"

Mrs. St. Dunstan looked at her quivering form. Again her husband's face rose before her, and she, too, grew pale; but she had gone too far to retreat. She was firm in her purpose, but she handled the knife with a gentler hand.

"Justine, I have been very harsh! Forgive me. But O! you know not how your words wounded me. Put the thought from

you, my child. Remember, that he is your brother."

Justine raised her head.

"No, mamma, he is not my brother, and he will not accept a brother's love. O Heavenly Father, why didst thou not take me when thou didst my mother?"

She sank into her seat, and sobbed.

Mrs. St. Dunstan walked the floor with a closely-knit brow. Finally, she stopped beside Justine.

"Justine," said she, "listen to me. Ever since you came beneath this roof I have tried to do my duty to you as faithfully as if you were my own child; and till this day I have never had cause to regret it. Justine, I tell you plainly, you cannot marry Aubury. He must marry a woman who is his acknowledged equal in every respect. You know you are not. It is nonsense to talk of love. Accept Brown, and Aubury's fancy will soon die. In regard to yourself, do your duty to Brown, and time will do the rest. I trust you have good sense enough, to see that it is best to do as I wish; but if you have not, you will not only forfeit my friendship forever, but you will ruin Aubury; for not one cent of this wealth does he touch, if he marries you. Now, Justine, I am done; and as superfluous words are painful to both, I'll leave you to make your decision. I trust it will be to dress, and receive Mr. Brown. And she sailed out of the room.

Poor Justine did not move. She was too stupefied to think, or even to weep. She looked drearily out into the street, where the lamps were beginning to twinkle. The darkness crept into the room and closed around her, but she did not notice it. All was dark alike to her. Presently came a knock at the door. Mechanically she said, "Come in."

The door opened, and Lucille's voice said:

"Why, Justine! All in darkness. Mercy, I shall break my neck! Please light your gas."

Justine did so, and as the strong yellow light fell on her face, Lucille started at the ravages a few hours had made.

"You want me, Lucille?" said she, quietly.

"No," replied Lucille, "aunty sent me to help you dress. She said you were not well, and would rather not have Jane."

Justine looked at her a moment, and said:

"Thank you; I need no help." Then a thought rushed through her brain; she clutched it as a drowning man does a straw.

"Yes," she exclaimed, eagerly, "you can help me! you can save me!"

She went to her, put her arms around her, and looked at her with hungry eyes.

"Lucille, dear Lucille, you must know what has happened. Mainma loves you; you have great influence with her. Plead with her for us, Lucille. She may yield to you."

The eyes of the wounded deer were never more piteous than hers, but Lucille put her from her, and said, coldly:

"Really, Justine, I am sorry for you, but I cannot help you. Of course you cannot understand our feelings on the subject. Poor aunty is terribly humiliated; and Justine—I beg your pardon—but considering the many favors she has conferred upon you, I think you are acting very ungratefully. Shall I help you dress, my dear?"

Justine drew herself up haughtily:

"Thank you, Miss De Grey, I will not trouble you. Tell Mrs. St. Dunstan I refuse decided to see Mr. Brown. Good-evening." And she walked away.

Lucille looked at her a second, and then, with a sneering laugh, left the room.

Justine clenched her hands tightly, and paced the room. There were no tears, no stupor now. Her face was firm and hard as marble. She paused before her desk; a daily paper lay on it. She picked it up and looked over its columns eagerly, till her eyes rested on the following:

"WANTED.—By a lady going to Europe, a governess for a girl of eight. A young lady preferred. Apply to Mrs. L. H. M—House."

Justine's hand shook. She looked at the date of the paper. It was several days past. Too late! The situation was taken long ago. She threw the paper down and was about to resume her walk, when she thought, "Perhaps it is not too late," and then with sudden decision she said aloud, "I'll try it!"

And before she could waver she was out in the dark street. It was a fearful thing for her, who, from her childhood, could count the times she had walked in the street at night, to be out in it alone, unprotected. But Justine felt those days of petted luxury were over, that the first chapter of her life was closed, and that, at the opening of the second, she stood as friendless as the first had found her. She drew her cloak closer, and walked quickly. The hotel was not far. Once, after she had reached it, and

stood with the bright bell-handle staring pitilessly at her, her heart grew faint, and she half turned away, but in a moment she conquered the weakness, and pulled the bell.

"Is Mrs. L. H., stopping here?" she asked of the servant.

"Yes marm—miss."

"Can I see her?"

"I think not. She denied all visitors, being very much engaged."

The dead ache of disappointment came over Justine, but she called up all her courage, and made one effort more.

"But you can take a message for me. Tell her a young lady wishes to see her in regard to her governess advertisement. It will be a great favor." And she held a bank-note towards him. At once he was all smiles and attention.

"Certainly, miss. Just step in here, and I will be but a few minutes." He opened the door of a small reception-room, and Justine went in and sat down. In a short time he returned. Mrs. H— would see the young lady in her room. Would she be so good as to follow him?

Justine rose, and with a calmness much like that which supports the criminal on the scaffold, followed him to Mrs. H.'s room. That lady rose from a half-packed trunk and received her kindly, but with an air of business.

"You call in response to the governess's position," said she, before Justine could speak. And then glancing at Justine's plain but rich dress, she added, "You wish it for a friend, I presume."

The frank self-reliance of her manner reassured Justine more than any amount of sympathy would have done, and she replied:

"No, madam, I wish it for myself. Pardon my applying at so late an hour, but I only saw your advertisement a short time ago. Is the situation still vacant?"

"Yes. I have had a great many applicants, but they either knew too much or too little. Lulu is my only child. Perhaps I am over-particular in regard to her governess; but I think there ought to be some half-way place, between starched old maids and gushing schoolgirls."

Justine actually smiled.

"After those remarks, madam, it is a fearful trial to my modesty, not to withdraw at once; but"—and her face grew sad—"it is very important for me to have the position, if you consider me competent."

Mrs. H. looked at her intently for a moment, and then put her through a short catechism, the result of which was satisfactory.

"I like you," said she at the close. "You are the woman I have been looking for; and now we must try to make a bargain. In the first place, can you be ready to sail at ten to-morrow morning?"

"Yes," replied Justine, quickly.

"Very well. All the rest is easily managed. I suppose you have references, but I have no time to look after them. You have a true honest face and I'll take you on its recommendation; I don't think it will play me false. The steamer sails at ten; be here at eight; that will leave us time for your ticket, and other arrangements. And now, I must dismiss you, for I have a great deal to attend to, and you will need all the time you have. Good-night;" and she opened the door for Justine to go out.

Mrs. St. Dunstan and Lucille sat at lunch alone. Aubury was still with his friend. Justine had not left her room.

"Do not disturb her," said Mrs. St. Dunstan at breakfast; "she needs rest, I will go to her by-and-by;" but the morning passed before she had courage to meet her. "I hope she is not ill," said she to Lucille at lunch. "Perhaps I had better send Mary to see." She rang and sent Mary. In a short time she returned.

"Miss Justine is not in her room, madame," she said.

"Not in her room, Mary? You must be mistaken."

"No, madame. The room is all in order, but Miss Justine is not in it."

"It is very strange. I will go myself. Come, Lucille. And together they went to Justine's room. They found everything as Mary had said, but no Justine.

"It is very strange," repeated Mrs. St. Dunstan, as she looked around. "She has risen early and gone out. I will inquire if any of the servants saw her."

"Wait, aunty," called Lucille. "Here is something that may explain all," and she handed her a note.

Mrs. St. Dunstan opened it and read half aloud:

"**MY DEAR MAMMA**,—Pardon me if I offend by calling you so; it is for the last time. You called me ungrateful; you wronged me deeply. All these years I have carried a debt of gratitude, which I have

prayed God would one day let me repay. He has done so, I am going away from you. Do not reproach yourself. Heaven has opened a way for me to earn my bread, and I am contented. Do not search for me; it will be useless. Forgive me the pain I have caused you, and do not quite forget Justine."

Mrs. St. Dunstan crushed the note in her hand, and staggered to a seat.

"Gone! Gone! and I have driven her away! Miserable, miserable woman!"

Lucille put her arms around her. "Don't, aunty, I am left to you!"

"You! And what are you, compared to my true-hearted, bright-haired Justine? O Harry! Harry! do not look so sternly at me."

Lucille saw words were vain. She let her spend her remorse; and then with words of honeyed poison she stifled its voice, and proved to her that it was for the best.

"Heigho! St. Dunstan under the Eagle's wings once more! I thought you had left the nest forever, and sworn allegiance to some crowned head the other side. When did you arrive? and how are mesdames, *vos femme et votre mere*?"

This greeting was uttered by Will Bently, one of Aubury's old-time friends, as they met in the reading-room of a fashionable hotel.

"I will answer backwards," replied Aubury, as he freed his hand from Bently's crushing grip, "and say, they are well. I arrived yesterday. In regard to the first, my dear fellow, a married man has no right to prefer any country, faith or state of being; but to go, think and do, just as his gracious spouse decrees."

"Whew!" whistled Bently; "an enticing picture for a bachelor."

"Very. You have no idea of the amount of mental labor it relieves one from. Get married, Will, as soon as possible."

"Thank you, I'll think of it. But wait a minute, Aubury, you are just the man I want."

"What for? Short of cash? That's the way they begin the other side."

"Look here, Aubury,—do you want—"

"No, my dear fellow, I want nothing. My cup is full to overflowing. Had I Aladdin's lamp, I'd let it rust, for want of rubbing. But state your want, my boy; satiety has not

made me insensible to the desires of my fellow-creatures yet. What is it?"

"You have almost knocked it out of my head with your confounded nonsense. It is this—a new *prima donna* comes out to-night at the Academy. Three or four of us are going to hear her, and you are just the chap to go with us; for having the notes of the nightingales of the other side fresh in your ears, you will be able to judge correctly of her merits, and tell us whether to be enthusiastic or cynical. Will you do us the honor?"

Aubury yawned.

"Who is she?"

"*Madeleine Isola*; an American, I believe, but educated in Milan. She is said to be beautiful."

Aubury shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm married, and never look twice at a woman under sixty."

"We will blindfold you, and you'll hear the better. Will you go?"

"Yes, if nothing more enticing turns up. Meet here? Very well. What, two o'clock! and I've a lot of baggage to hunt up before three. Marry the first woman who'll have you, Bently! *Au revoir*."

This scene occurred three years after the disappearance of Justine; and Aubury, his mother and wife had just returned from Europe. Yes, he had married Lucille. He returned the next day after Justine's flight. Mrs. St. Dunstan's remorse had subsided by that time, and she told him calmly that Justine had fled; fled without a word of farewell to one of them; without a cause for her conduct, or a hint as to where she was going, and leaving only a few words, saying that she was unworthy of their love, and begging them to forget her. In the violence of her first grief, Mrs. St. Dunstan destroyed the note; and the only witness for Justine was gone.

At first Aubury was stunned, then he defiantly refused to hear a word of ill against her, and employed every means that wealth could command and skill devise to track her, but in vain; miles of water already lay between them. Baffled and sorrowing, he gave up the search, and hid alike the doubts and wounds he could not silence, beneath a mantle of cynicism. His mother watched him anxiously, and Lucille, who now lived with her aunt, felt "hope grow gray." But despair was not one of her weaknesses; patiently and carefully she played her game.

What remained for Aubury but to yield? and two years later she was his wife.

The Academy was crowded, when Aubury and his friend took their seats, a few minutes before the curtain rose. Aubury looked carelessly around the house, and half yawned.

"That's not fair, St. Dunstan," said one of the party. "We cannot permit that till after the first act."

"I expect to be revelling in the music of dreamland by that time."

"We won't mind that, for you will be quiet. But seriously, I don't think you will be so very much bored. This little Isola is said to be something wonderful."

"That doesn't make her individual by a long distance. They all are. The most spacious and wonderful animals in the whole kingdom."

The curtain rose. The opera was "*Sonambula*." The chorus was not bad, and Aubury's eyes were still open when Amina appeared on the stage. A slight start, and then he drew his breath hard, and clenched his hands till the nails sank into the flesh. It was Justine!

The curtain fell upon the first act. Isola was a success; and wave after wave of applause rolled through the house.

Bently turned to Aubury.

"Shall I add—" He stopped short. The seat was empty.

In the confusion of the first uproar Aubury had escaped, and made his way behind the scenes.

He went to the *prima donna's* door. A smart-looking French maid was just about to enter.

"Be so good as to give that to *Madeleine Isola*," said he, presenting his card.

The maid shook her head, and did not take it.

"*Madeleine's* orders are explicit; she receives no one."

"But I am a relative."

She smiled incredulously.

"Ah, monsieur, the whole city would soon be relatives, if that would admit them to *mademoiselle*."

Aubury took a bank note from his pocket and offered it to her. She stepped back. "Monsieur, I serve *mademoiselle*."

Aubury gnawed his mustache with rage and disappointment. At that moment the door opened, and Justine's voice called, "*Jacquelle!*"

Aubury gave the maid a look so fierce that it made her start; and before she could recover herself he pushed the door open, entered, and closed it behind him. Justine's back was towards him. She saw a man's shadow fall before her, and turned indignantly. A startled cry:

"Justine!"

"Aubury!"

And they stood face to face. For a moment neither moved; and then Aubury held out his arms. His voice was husky.

"Justine, will you come to me?" And she sprang into his embrace. It was only for a moment. Then she tore herself away.

"No, no! I must not! Why have you come? O leave me!" She buried her face in her hands and sobbed.

Aubury grew like marble. He put his arm around her; she shrank from him.

"Justine! Justine! What does this mean? Where have you been all these years? Why did you leave me? Speak, or I shall go wild!"

But Justine did not speak. He waited a few minutes; and then in a voice stern with pain, he said:

"You will not speak, Justine! You refuse to explain the past! Must I believe what they told me; that you deceived us all, that you were unworthy of our love?"

Justine raised her head; her eyes flashed, but her cheeks were pale.

"Did they tell you that? Were they cruel enough to tell you that? And you can believe it?"

"No, I cannot, I will not believe it, if one word, one look of yours refutes it. Justine, did you ever love me? If so, trust me now."

She clasped her hands on her breast.

"I can bear this no longer, Aubury. I will tell you all, and trust all to you."

And she went to him, and leaning her head upon his shoulder, told him the cruel story of the past.

When she had finished, he put her from him, and with clenched hands, and the veins standing out in great knots upon his brow, he paced the little room. Suddenly he stopped. He clutched Justine's arm like a vice, and whispered through tightly shut teeth:

"God may forgive them, Justine; I never can! Lucille is my wife!"

"They wait, mademoiselle," said Jacqueline at the door.

She drew her arm away.

"Yes, yes! your wife, Aubury! Jacqueline, come to me!" She leaned heavily against a chair.

Jacqueline rushed to her.

"O mademoiselle! She is dying! Wretch, you have killed her!"

Aubury bent over her.

"Be calm! She is only faint. Bring water! Wait, wine is better."

Jacqueline hurriedly brought a glass, and held it to her lips. The bell rang for the curtain to rise.

"Go tell the manager, that mademoiselle is ill, and cannot appear again to-night." But Justine held her back.

"No, stay." She rose to her feet. "I am better now. I can go. Give me your arm, Jacqueline. Good-by, Aubury." And leaning on Jacqueline she went out for the stage.

Aubury remained a few minutes; and then, weaker than she, he dared not trust himself to act his part among his friends, and left the theatre by a side door. And Justine, how did she pass through the ordeal?

Bravely! Once on the stage again, her strength returned. She sang nobly, grandly; and the next morning, the fashionable world was ringing with her fame.

Lucille sat idly over her chocolate and rolls. The three past years had dealt kindly with her; Mrs. St. Dunstan was the reflection of Miss De Grey. The same clear complexion, the same dreamy eyes, the same indolent grace. A close observer might see that she was older, and that the shadows of a few wrinkles were beginning to show; but Lucille didn't permit close observation. She was alone. Mrs. St. Dunstan, senior, had not left her room, and Aubury had not been seen since the evening before. He had sent her neither warning of nor excuse for his absence, but she did not seem at all troubled; there was not a trace of the distress usually exhibited by wives under such circumstances. In fact, Lucille's married life was not overflowing with affection and solicitude for her husband. She had loved Aubury as well as she could love anything; but after she had gained the prize she paid so high a price for, the indolence of her nature asserted itself, and as Aubury did not fan the flame with much ardor, it soon died out to a very faint spark. She looked at her watch.

"Nearly twelve. It is strange that Au-

bury does not come. Where can he be? I am glad mamma isn't down; she would be anxious."

At that moment all cause of anxiety was removed, by her husband's entering the room. He walked to the other side of the table, and looked at her. Even her calmness was ruffled by the change she saw. He was pale and haggard, and the dark circles under his eyes told that he had not slept during the past night. She was about to speak, but he stopped her.

"Pardon me, but I have a few words to say. They are not pleasant, but they are unavoidable, and they shall be brief. Last night I saw Justine, and forced from her unwilling lips the true story of her flight. I will not dwell on what she said. You, probably, could tell me more than she would. The past is beyond recall. I will not waste reproaches or regrets, but deal with the future, which is in my power, Lucille. The law has made you my wife; before the world I shall still treat you as such; but beyond that, from this hour forth we are strangers. I leave it to you to tell my mother what has happened. Good-morning, madam!" And he walked quickly out of the room.

The St. Dunstan mansion was refurnished, regilded, and bedizened throughout; and then its doors were thrown open to the fashionable world. Lucille entertained magnificently and dressed faultlessly. Too indolent to say ill-natured things, her temper was considered faultless, and she was worshipped by all as reigning deity. She bore her honors gracefully. She felt she had bought them too dearly, but her ambition was satisfied; and though the ache would not be lulled, the pain never reached her face. But it was not so with her husband. The lines around his mouth sank deeper; his eyes grew sterner, and more than one silver thread glistened in his dark hair. He was faithful to his compact, and always attended his wife in public; where, from the scrupulousness of his attention, no one could even suspect the dark gulf that yawned between them. But when the door closed on the world the mask fell off, and they stepped back to the cold civility of strangers. Only once since that morning had Aubury mentioned Justine's name. At her request, he had offered her forgiveness to his mother, and asked her to see her. She refused. "Justine had made mischief

enough. She had outraged propriety, by leaving her protection and throwing herself on the world. She washed her hands of her, and if Aubury were wise, he would do the same."

And Aubury showed his wisdom, by being at the backdoor of the theatre every night, to protect Justine to her home. He never missed a night. No matter at what brilliant *affaire* Lucille might be, he left her long enough to perform this service for Justine, and then returned.

Of course this could not escape Mrs. Grundy long; and soon, scores of tender hearts were bleeding for "poor Mrs. St. Dunstan, who must feel so terribly over her husband's scandalous flirtation with that opera singer. What dreadful things men were, to leave such a pure beautiful angel as his wife, for that bold painted thing. It was too dreadful."

These rumors reached Aubury's ears, but he paid no attention to them. They came to Lucille, too. Her pride smarted under them; and once at her request Aubury's mother remonstrated with him. His reply was:

"Tell Lucille, that when I have sinned against her as deeply, as she has against me, I will acknowledge her right to reproach me."

The snows of winter melted. April showers had shed their freshness, and the pink buds of May began to open. Already wornout belles were leaving the city to refresh themselves with a month of pure air and rest, before the summer campaign began.

The St. Dunstan mansion was among the first closed, and Lucille and her mother established themselves in a seaside villa. Aubury remained in the city. Justine's engagement was not yet ended, and Aubury would not leave her alone in the city. Lucille secretly chafed under this, and his mother openly remonstrated, but in vain. He took them to their villa, and returned to Justine.

One, two weeks passed. Justine's last night came. Her farewell was "Lucia." Never had her success been more brilliant. The house shook with applause; and when she came before the curtain, she was nearly buried in a flowery cloud. How the women envied her; and how the men worshipped her; and how in the midst of all this glory her heart lay heavy like lead,

she would gladly have exchanged with the lowliest happy mortal in the throng. The cruel stories had reached her ears, and she had resolved that night to send Aubury from her.

At last enthusiasm was exhausted, and she escaped to her room. She hastily exchanged her dress, and went out to her carriage. Aubury was waiting for her as usual. He handed her in, took his seat beside her, and they rolled away, Justine leaning back wearily on the cushions.

"Are you tired, Justy?" said Aubury. "One would think that triumph was enough to put fresh life into the dying. Thank Heaven! it is the last. To-morrow you must leave the city. I have made arrangements with an excellent lady, to take care of you. I shall go with you, and see you safely settled; and then come to see you very often."

Justine sank deeper in the cushions, and said in a low voice:

"Heaven bless you, Aubury, for your kindness; but I cannot accept it!"

Aubury looked at her in alarm.

"Not accept it, Justine? What can you mean? Do you prefer any one else?"

"O no, no, you know that. But, Aubury, you must not go with me or visit me this summer. Do not think me unkind, for Heaven knows it is harder on me than you. You are all I have in the world; but duty says it must be so. Aubury, the world knows nothing of our past. To it, you are the rich Mr. St. Dunstan, and I only a successful actress. Did you think it would let our friendship pass unnoticed? Ah, no, no. Sometime ago I heard unpleasant rumors; but I did not heed them, for you were more to me than all the world could say; but they grow thicker and blacker; and now, for your sake, Aubury, they must be silenced."

"For my sake, Justine?"

"Yes, Aubury. You bear a proud old name. I never can be the means of casting a stain upon it. And besides—Lucille! Think of her!"

"Think of her! Would to heaven I could blot her existence from my memory. Justine, I have not told you, for I hate the sound of her name; and I knew, too, that it would pain you, but since I have known the story of the past, Lucille and I have been strangers. These rumors reached her long ago. They hurt her pride. Let them; but they cannot touch her heart. She has none."

A silence followed; and the tears slowly rolled down Justine's face. Aubury bent over her.

"O Justy! Justy! Will you really send me from you?"

"I do not do it, Aubury. It is the world!"  
Aubury burst out passionately:

"The world! Justine, is the world more to you than I am? It has given you all it can. Can it give happiness? To-night you are loaded with its honors. Do they fill the void in your heart? Those tears say no. Put the world from you! Scorn it! Defy it! Come to me, Justine! I will be more than all the world to you. My darling! my darling!"

She looked at him with a frightened gaze. He tried to take her hand; but she shrank from him.

"Do not shrink from me, Justine. We belonged to each other before they came between us. It is no sin to take back our own. Justy, will you come?"

Justine bent her head low in her hands. God only saw the fearful struggle, God only knew the depth of her desolation. At last she raised her head:

"Aubury, I will go with you! And may God judge me according to my temptation!"

"I'm afraid we'll have rather a rough night, captain," said a gentleman, as he stopped at the side of Captain M., of the steamer "Dolphin," bound for Liverpool. The captain looked anxiously over the black tumbling mass of clouds.

"Yes; I fear we shall. A very unusual thing for this season, and come up like a thunder-clap."

"Not if the engine works; and we can keep her head to the wind. But if that should break down; God help us! The Jersey beach lies behind us. I can hear the roar of the breakers now. No ship could live in them thirty minutes."

The captain walked away; and a lurch sent the gentleman below.

Night came on, and the storm grew harder. By midnight it was a hurricane. The vessel labored fearfully; each minute it seemed she must go down; but still the engine creaked and snorted, and held the waves at bay. Justine had retired early to her stateroom. Before the storm became so loud she slept, but the increased fury of the tempest awakened her. She arose, put on a thick wrapper and shawl, and not car-

ing to endure the confusion she knew would be in the saloon, she sat down to wait what would happen. Suddenly there was a loud crash. Then all was still a moment; and then the ship was thrown violently on her beam end, and Justine was hurled from her seat. For a moment she was stunned; but recovering herself, she struggled to her feet, as Aubury's voice called:

"Justine! Justine! Come out at once. We are in great danger!"

The engine had broken down!

Mrs. St. Dunstan and Lucille had spent a stupid day in the villa. In fact, they had been bored for some time. They had had no guests; the neighboring houses were still empty; and the scenery of the "Hook" is not sufficiently rich to support ecstasies more than a week. In truth the villa was not a cheerful place in solitude, with the green ocean in front of it, the narrow strip of white sand beneath it, and the blue river behind it. It was truly marine; and looked as if an anchor cast on the green Highlands, opposite, would make it a much safer dwelling-place. Lucille had been reading, and Mrs. St. Dunstan sleeping, the whole afternoon. At length Lucille threw aside her book, and walked to the window.

"I believe, mamma, that it is going to storm. The ocean looks positively frightful. I wonder if it is possible for us to be washed away?"

"Of course not, Lucille. Do you think any one would have been so foolish as to put the house here, if it were? Is Aubury coming down to-night?"

"I'm sure I don't know. You forget he doesn't honor me with his confidence." She spoke with a bitterness, that for her was violent.

"I wish that worthless Jade were at the north pole."

"I wonder if that would do any good?"

"Why?"

At this moment dinner was announced, and the subject dropped. The storm grew more violent, and it seemed, indeed, as if the two waters would meet and swallow them. They retired early to find unconsciousness in sleep. But in vain—the shrieking and howling of the wind made sleep impossible.

Mrs. St. Dunstan's windows overlooked the ocean, and through them, drawing aside the curtain, she could see the wild white

billows break on the beach, and occasionally the spray would dash against her windows. She closed her eyes to shut out the sight, but in vain: the surging waves were still before her, and their ghostly peaks seemed to nod to her with meaning gestures, till she could endure it no longer and rose to close the curtains.

Suddenly, "Boom! Boom!" rose the sound of guns from some vessel in distress—a solemn and awful warning, rising above the roar of the wind and waves, and then the room was illuminated as though by a flash of lightning. It lasted about half a minute, and when it died away she saw from her window a great red ball of fire hanging over the water. At first it was stationary; then it trembled, and then it grew still again for a second. At last it burst into a hundred little tongues of flame, which shot up and became lost in the darkness. By the quick glare thus caused, Mrs. St. Dunstan descried the tall masts of a vessel, which stood out sharply defined against the black sky for a moment, only to vanish into darkness as the light faded suddenly away. Lucille now rapped at the door, and when it was opened, exclaimed:

"Is it not frightful? We shall all be killed. O, if we were only out of this dreadful place!"

"Calm yourself, Lucille. It is a wild night, and the storm is indeed fearful. No one can sleep; so put on your wrapper, and we will sit together."

The two women dressed themselves and sat with mute lips, looking out into the darkness with wan faces. Alas! they little dreamed what that stranded ship held for them. An hour passed, and then there was a loud rap at the door; the frightened servants, who had been cowering in the kitchen, opened it. A group of men stood there. Men with dripping clothes and rough faces, but with true and honest hearts.

"Can you give us a little fire here, and some blankets?" asked the leader. "Here's a man from the *wreck*. He looks pretty well used up, but there may be some life in him yet. We'll try for it any way. Move lively there; and build up a fire. Ladies, you had better stand back."

But held by some power, they stood still; and the men bore the dripping form before them. The brine-soaked clothes clung tightly to it, the hair was matted on the forehead; and a cruel gash was across one cheek; but

spite of all one glance told them the truth.  
It was Aubury!

Neither shrieked, neither fainted, but their eyes were riveted on that ghastly form, and each felt her hand had helped lay it there.

Gently, and with tearful eyes, those rough men bore the body to the fire, and used every means to restore life. But it was in vain—Aubury was dead. In the gray dawn they laid his cold form in the little parlor above, where his wife and mother sat, in mute agony.

The day broke on a dismal scene. The tossing sea; the black river; the shattered wreck; and the group of wild figures on the sand. The vessel was utterly destroyed, only her naked ribs remained bristling above the waves. All lives had been saved except two—the woman who fell over the boat, and the man who jumped after her. Later in the day, when this tale came to the ears of the stricken women, Lucille looked at her mother, and she raised her clasped hands to heaven and moaned:

“God forgive me! I have killed both!”

The day wore on, and at the change of tide word came that the woman was found. Mrs. St. Dunstan arose and said:

“Come, Lucille, we must go and claim her.”  
Lucille drew back.

“What! If I can bear it, you should not break down.” And arm in arm they walked down to the beach. And there, on the cold

wet sand, her clothes dripping, and her long bright hair tangled with seaweed, lay Justine. Long and silently, with bowed heads, they gazed upon her. They knew why she was there. They knew that sin had brought her death; but their agonized hearts felt that theirs was the greater crime; and that “All that remains of her, now is pure, womanly.”

Mrs. St. Dunstan bade them take her up and bear her to the house, and in the dim room they laid her by Aubury, united at last in the wedlock of death.

With all the pomp of wealth Aubury St. Dunstan was laid to rest in his ancestral vault. But they could not mock with empty honors the clay they had scorned in life. They made her grave on the Hook. There, where in summer the hot sun beats pitilessly down, and in winter the sky stretches a low leaden arch, beneath which the ghostly cedars cast weird shadows; where the bleak winds whistle, the seagulls shriek, the sharp sand scurries by, and the deep-voiced ocean sobs its deathless moan. There they laid her, so young, so bright, so true; and over the grave they raised a pure white cross inscribed:

“JUSTINE.

LOST AT SEA.

Aged 21.”

# KATHIE.

Verne, Margaret

*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); May 1872; 35, 5; American Periodicals*  
pg. 433

## KATHIE.

BY MARGARET VERNE.

"Now, girls, if you can only manage to live there three or four months, the land will be ours for all time. I know it looks hard, but I see no other way for us."

I looked into my father's pale careworn face, and then glanced over to Kathie, who stood locking and unlocking her pretty white fingers as though in some way they held the solution of the problem which just then was puzzling us.

"I don't mind the place, father," she began, in her sweet voice. "Together, with our books, music and sewing, Lulu and I can stand almost anything; but it seems so lonely for a couple of girls to go off into the

heart of the prairie and live by themselves. Besides, if either of us were taken suddenly ill, or if danger should in any way come to us, what could we do?"

"Why, the nearest neighbor is not more than five miles away, and he'll look you up every week or two, perhaps every day or two; besides, either one of you is strong enough to walk that distance in case of emergency. The house is away from the road, secluded by a growth of cottonwood, with a brisk little creek near. No one will know that you are there, so you will be in no danger from intruders. I would not ask it of you if there were any other way, or if I could go myself;

but as my health is, you know that constant medical attendance is necessary to me—”

A violent fit of coughing interrupted him, and Kathie and I, more touched by that than we could have been by aught else, put our arms about his neck and promised to do as he wished. True, we had a good cry over it when we were by ourselves, but before him we were in good spirits, planning, cheerfully, about our quarter of a year's sojourn on father's claim of one hundred and sixty acres.

Our minds once made up, we put the dark side of the picture out of sight, and began to look for the brighter touches. We laid in a stock of provisions that would have victualled a family of six for the given time. We took our sewing-machine with two bolts of muslin; packed up a big box of books, our guitar, father's violin, and music enough for an orchestra, and started for the wilderness. Once in four weeks we were to have our mail brought to us from the outer world, together with little necessities that must be obtained from time to time. Our only society in the meantime, must be that of each other, unless we counted our six Brahma hens and a brood of ten young chickens.

We found the place precisely as it had been described to us, a dilapidated cottage that must have been thought almost palatial at the time of building. It was built of logs, of course; but it had four rooms, two of which were fit for use. There had been an entry running through it, but the front as well as the back door was off its hinges, giving the prairie wind a splendid chance to scurry through. There were shaky stairs, also, and one large room above that had not progressed beyond bare beams and rafters. A few boards were placed across, path-fashion, but beyond that, nothing had been done in the way of improvement.

“A fine chance to lock up of nights!” was Kathie's first exclamation, as she pointed to the unhinged doors.

“No bolts or locks to the two habitable rooms, either,” I made answer.

“Well, since we shall have nothing more formidable than mosquitos and snakes to lock out, I suppose there is little use in being afraid. We can set the doors up of nights, and take them down in the morning. That will answer just as well as locks and hinges.”

So we set up housekeeping. The man who carted our movables thither put up our stove and bedstead, made us a shelter for

our hens (which, by the way, the first strong wind blew over), stopped long enough to drink a cup of coffee, and hope we shouldn't be lonesome, and then set his face homeward. It was weeks before we looked upon a human countenance again.

At the very outset we began life in a systematic way; had a regular time for breakfast and dinner; sewed, and practised our music afternoon and evening, and filled up every niche of the time with reading and writing. Then we had all our household labor to perform, washing, ironing, cooking and scrubbing, and though our hands did not keep remarkably white, we were never more healthy in our lives, or had more voracious appetites.

For a time everything went along smoothly. We had two or three hard storms with wind and terrific lightning. A giant cottonwood was struck at the door, and the creek was so swollen with rain that it overflowed its banks, and made pretty good headway towards the house. We soon grew as fearless of nights as we had ever been, sleeping with our windows as well as our doors set wide open.

One day, while we were out strawberrying, something occurred to unsettle our equanimity. We seldom left the house together, or went from it but a short distance, thinking it safer for one of us to remain constantly on guard. But this morning was particularly fresh and sweet, the prairie grass was flecked with crimson berries which we were just in the mood for picking. Beside, we had been practising assiduously at our music, and felt the need of exercise in the open air. I do not know how long we had been at our pastime, eating, gathering the delicious fruit, laughing and chatting as girls are wont to do if they are wholly free from restraint, when we were startled by hearing a few distinct notes struck upon what seemed to be father's violin.

Kathie dropped her basket and looked up with whitening face. The violin was her particular forte, and the notes struck were in a difficult passage of the opera which she had been practising that morning.

“Somebody is at the house. Let us go,” she said, clasping my arm.

But just then there came a bolder touch upon the instrument, and the opera was played through as if by a master hand.

“I believe I shall faint,” Kathie whispered.

“I threw my basket of strawberries

straight in her face, forgetting for the moment that they were not water. It was so ludicrous that she could not keep from laughing. She wiped the crimson stains from her cheeks and forehead, and took a step or two towards the house.

"There is no use in fearing a man or woman who can play like that," I said, soothingly.

"A woman!" repeated Kathie, half scornfully.

The flash of her eye and the curl of her red lip I did not understand then, and so I looked at her wonderingly.

"Shall we go?" she asked, impatiently

Just then the violin was touched again, an old Italian melody floating softly from it Kathie sank down upon the grass, a sudden color rising to her pale cheeks.

"Let us go," I said, moving forward "If we have guests we should meet and welcome them."

Kathie put out a detaining hand.

"Not yet, Lulu, he may play again Beside, I dare not go."

The child was trembling with excitement. I put a strong arm about her and lifted her to her feet. "Come, dear, perhaps our Fate is waiting for us."

I spoke carelessly, but the words affected her strangely.

"Perhaps so, O Lulu! if I only dared speak!"

"Your dear romantic creature, there is no need of speaking," I answered, not knowing what she meant. "Come along. Let us find him."

We were but a short distance from home, although the house was lost to view behind a swell of the prairie. In a few moments we were stealing softly in at the door, I, at least, intent on catching sight of the unknown intruder. We were too late. Everything was silent there. The violin in its case as Kathie had left it, my guitar in its green covering beside it. Not a single article of furniture, not a piece of music disturbed.

"It was some one outside, Kathie," I said.

But Kathie made no answer. Instead, she caught up the violin and played the difficult opera without a single mistake. She did not look at her music either.

I clapped my hands softly, but she did not heed me. Then she began the Italian melody, and played it through just as we had heard it.

"You have played it before, Kathie?" I asked, gravely.

"Never."

"You have heard it."

She blushed rosily red.

"There is some mystery here that I do not understand," I said, speaking slowly, and looking with steady eyes into her face. "You never told me—"

"I had nothing to tell you," she said, quickly, interrupting me.

"Nothing that you wanted to tell me, you mean," I answered, more hurt than I cared to let her know.

She went on with her music without another word, and I turned away to attend some household duty. But from that time there was a shadow between us—an inexplicable something, which lessened the warmth of our kisses and the clasp of our hands. It did not show itself in words, for we were too true to speak impatiently or unkindly to each other. We were motherless, and from the time of earliest childhood had been all in all to each other. I was two years Kathie's senior, and for that length of time we had been separated, while she was at school in an Eastern State. Nevertheless, during that probation I had believed that I shared her every thought, the inmost secrets of her heart, as she had mine.

A day or two after this incident, a messenger came to us with our letters, and a package of books and papers. I noticed that Kathie caught eagerly at a letter that bore her name, and when, a moment after, I turned to ask her some trifling question, I found that she had stolen softly out.

"Kathie has some secret love affair," I thought, more troubled by the conviction than I had ever been before by aught concerning her. But I did not question her; how could I? Her confidence had been given heretofore spontaneously and without reserve. When she withheld her secrets from me, I thought I had no longer a right to know them. And yet, of our loves, or our preferences (for we had not gone beyond them), how freely we had conversed! how readily shared each other's thoughts!

If we had been in any other save that secluded spot, I would have written to my father at once. Yet I see now that my way of reasoning was weak in the extreme. A danger to Kathie was a thousand times more to be dreaded there than it would have been in the heart of home, among friends who

loved and cherished her. And yet, after all, I had so little upon which to ground my fears—a floating strain of music, which, after all, some wanderer might have played as he rode across the prairies—a note, a letter, which she did not see fit to share with me!

But from that time Kathie played upon her violin as if by inspiration. The old difficulties which had obstructed her way melted before her, and she made such rapid progress as astonished me, and still she seemed to be going further and further from me.

One day as we sat by the open door (I speak advisedly, the door was always open), we were startled by the sudden appearance of a large Newfoundland dog. He came towards me first, but as I reached out my hand, he caught sight of Kathie. With a short joyful bark, he bounded past me to her side.

"Leo!" she cried, putting both her arms around his shaggy neck. "How glad I am!"

She stopped short and looked up into my wondering face.

"What does it mean, Kathie? Whose dog is it?"

"I think I shall claim him myself if no one calls for him," she answered, evading my question.

I stooped down to read the name engraved upon the silver collar about his neck. It bore the dog's name, LEO, and the initials, G. M.

"What does G. M. stand for?" I asked, pointing to the letters.

"How can I tell?"

"How did you tell the dog's name? Why were you so glad to see him?"

The look in her eyes grew pitiable as I questioned her.

"Dear Lulu, dear darling!" she cried, putting her arms about me, and looking down into my face. "I can't tell you—at least nothing but this. Fate seems against me, or for me, whichever way you will. I came here to evade it, but it follows me. Don't question me further. I love you—rest on that."

Darling, blessed Kathie! if she could only have shown me her heart then, I might have saved her!

All that day the dog Leo watched by her, following her whichever way she turned. When she sat down he lay at her feet; at night, when she slept, he kept close by the bedside. But a sense of coming danger was upon me, and I could not sleep. If I lost

myself for a moment in uneasy slumbers, I was startled by my own dreams—of some terrible danger to Kathie. Another night came and went in the same way, and still another came. I never shall forget the third. There were signs of a storm in the sky, and a moon nearly at its full was trying to fight its way through the clouds. The cottonwoods sighed as though a breaking heart was moaning through them, and the chirp of restless birds struck with a lonesome sound upon my ears.

"I believe there is to be a dreadful storm," Kathie said. "I wish we had some one with us."

"We are as safe here as anywhere," I answered; "and for that matter, as safe alone."

"O Lulu, how can you be so strong?" she asked.

Just at that moment a bark from Leo attracted her attention, and she ran away from me towards the creek, calling his name. I never shall forget how she looked at that moment. Her pretty hair floated back from her fair face, an eager happy look shone from her eyes. Did she know?

I turned toward the house and sighed, for my heart was very heavy. A few moments passed, and she did not return. The storm was rising fast, and I went back to the door and called her name:

"Kathie! Kathie!"

But no answer came. Only the distant muttering of the thunder, the sighing of the wind, and the cry of a homeward flying bird.

"Kathie! Kathie!"

I ran down the bank of the creek, but saw no one there. Then I called loudly for Leo, but heard only the breath of the coming storm. I ran up and down the banks of the creek, wildly calling her name. O, the terrible agony of that moment! O, the wild desperation of my soul, with that double darkness within, and without me! I went back to the house, only to find silence and desolation. Then the storm broke. Peal after peal of heavy thunder sounded, flashes of lightning came that lighted the landscape for miles around; after that the fearful wind and the driving rain. Worse than all, the question that burned through heart and brain, "Where is Kathie?"

By-and-by the wind lulled, the lightning grew paler, and the muttering of the thunder more distant, but the roaring of the waters of the creek was loud and angry. The moon came out, and going towards the banks

of the little stream, I found it had swollen to the size of a large river. All this—and where was Kathie?

Need I tell of the night that followed? How age came upon me as I wandered alone over the wet prairie, and called the name of my darling by the roaring waters, "Kathie! Kathie!" here and there, yet waking no answer? Nothing but the blank loneliness—the fearful despair! At last the morning came; came sunny and bright, as it always comes to souls in agony, seeming to mock at their lamentations.

To me it brought no hope, no gladness. I did not know where my darling was. Two days elapsed before the creek went down to its usual size. By that time I had found our far-off neighbors, and they joined me in my search. It was not long continued. Not a hundred yards from our home we found Kathie, dead! Dead, and not alone. A dark-haired man, with brown silky beard, had met his fate with her, and still further off poor Leo lay, caught as they had been, in the debris of the stream, which had drifted into a little cove and become fastened there.

As their dead bodies were borne towards our house, another party came; a pale-faced woman, with a little child in her arms. Her husband was lost. She and her friends were searching for him. I knew, as I looked into her face, that this was not her first grief—

the apparent loss of her husband. Her eyes were full of yearning sadness, and her mouth wore a look that grief always leaves upon its victims. In a moment a thought came to me like a revelation. The mystery that had puzzled me for weeks grew clear as sunshine. *Kathie had loved this woman's husband!* They had died together. Thank God that it was so; they were dead!

"Your husband is here," I began, reaching out my arms for her child. "But wait—tell me his name."

"George Marston. He must have been drowned in the creek, for his horse came home without him."

She followed me into the house, low sobs breaking from her lips. She knelt by the bedside, but as she did so, caught sight of Kathie's dead face.

"And this? For God's sake tell me—who is this?"

"My sister," I answered. "They died together."

Our eyes met, and she understood me.

"He followed her West; gave up home—everything for her. He loved her better than he did me," she moaned, taking her little one from my arms, and hugging it tightly to her breast.

I could not speak, but in my inmost soul I thanked my God that they were dead.

# KATIE'S EXPERIMENT.

Fenwick, Richard

*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Jul 1874; 40, 1; American Periodicals*  
pg. 37

## KATIE'S EXPERIMENT.

BY RICHARD FENWICK.

"My most lovely girl!" said I, "the sad case is just this: It costs more money to marry than I can afford just now. God knows, I wish I had more, but I have not, and you and I must put up with the disagreeable circumstances just as we find them for the present."

She looked at me and sighed.

"Well, well. I'm sorry, but I'll stand by you, dear boy, until you are tired of me, or get rich."

"It may not be so long, after all," I replied. "As for being tired of you, that is too absurd, my duck, too silly. Don't say so again; it makes me miserable."

"You told me you were going to C—. Why, Dick?"

"Business for the infernal firm. Jewels to carry to a lady whose daughter is about to do what you will one of these blessed days—marry."

"And don't you wish to go?"

"No; frankly, Katie, I'm strongly impressed with the safety of home, when I go about with some thousands of dollars in my care. Our man was robbed last time, you know, and got his discharge."

"He was above you?"

"Yes, he had three thousand a year, and I have just half."

"You are as good a judge of jewels and setting as he?"

"Yes, quite—perhaps a better."

"Then carry these safely, and they will give you his place. Then we can be married—if you like."

I plucked up. I confess I had been despairing. Katie had always been bright and cheering, but I had been downcast, in

consequence of my failure to attain the position I wished, and the consequent deferring of my marriage to her.

I hastened my departure; I took my jewels, eight diamonds and one large ruby, and carried them to my lodgings. On my way, I called and got a handbag of leather, the handle of which was hollow. Into this I thrust the gems. I showed Katie my plan before I left for the train, and I noticed she examined everything carefully, and asked me my intentions in regard to my movements with particular minuteness. This I did not at first notice, nor, in fact, until two days after.

"The jewels are in the handle, did you say, Dick? How did you get them in there?"

"O, by merely unfastening the rivet, in this way; that exposes the leather tube, and the gems go in easily."

"You will look at them occasionally?"

"O no, I can feel them. That is the advantage of my plan; and they are constantly under my touch, and I need never expose them, in order to assure myself that they are there."

"And what is in the bag itself?"

"Nothing but rubbish; paper, rags, a book or two."

"I suppose the firm would value your services all the more, if you were attacked, or if an attempt was made to rob you?"

"Certainly; then I should have all manner of praise and commendation. Then I should rise, then I could have all I wished, and both of us would then get the benefit of our misfortune."

"When do you go—at what hour?"

"At five to-night. It is now three. You see I take an unfrequented route. It is disagreeable to meet people when you have a secret."

"Shall I come to see you off?"

"Do, Katie. I will then have something to think of. I hope I may get through safely, but I feel anxious."

She looked at me, shook her head, laughed, and went away.

At five she was there, blooming and smiling as usual, and I imagined she was a little nervous; but that might have been because I was going away.

As the train left, she stood waving her handkerchief, and I carried the sight of her handsome face in my mind all the rest of the journey.

I had told her everything respecting my plans. I was to stop at Warwick, a station half way to my destination, and go on from there in the morning at four o'clock. I was to stop at a hotel. I noticed that she seemed to pay the most extraordinary attention to what I said, and even asked me over and over again, in order to impress it upon her mind. I put my bag by my side, and passed my arm through the handle, and composed myself to my ride. Seven hours later I arrived at my stopping-place.

I looked about me before dismounting from the cars. I could see no suspicious person. All were ordinary travellers; none were muffled, none eyed me suspiciously, and no one followed me.

I went to a retired hotel, carrying my travelling-bag, and the one containing the diamonds. I called for my room, and after supper I prepared to retire. My apartment contained ordinary furniture. I examined the doors, and placed a pistol by the side of my bed, so that I might be ready at a moment's warning. I fell asleep, with my precious bag beneath the clothing, and my arm still through the handle.

I was partially aroused by hearing a heavy church clock in the neighborhood strike twelve. I just remember that I heard it, and no more. I next felt a bandage passed over my head, over my mouth and nostrils, snuffed a stifling perfume, then became unconscious.

I arose at daylight. I was in agony. My head was fit to burst. I looked about with half-opened eyes. I was alone; the furniture was undisturbed, the door was closed

and locked. I smelt ether. I instantly looked for my bag. It was gone.

I cannot explain my distress. I at once flew to the door, in order to arouse the house, when I was met by the porter, who, without noticing my distracted condition, handed me a telegram, which had at that moment arrived. I opened it with trembling fingers. It was signed by the firm.

"HENRY,—If you should meet any disaster, go on to C—, direct, and await instructions at the Adelphi Hotel.

"S— & Co."

The telegram was correct, the stamped paper bore the mark of the proper officer, and all was regular. I was puzzled, but I had no option. I asked for the train. I was in time. I had not one single second to spare. I called the landlord, and told him that I had been robbed, or that a robbery had been attempted, and bade him inform the police, and have all efforts made at once for the recovery of the valise. I did not say what it contained; for I felt positive that the robbers could not have known of my possession of the diamonds, and I did not care to advertise them and their hiding-place. I felt that the theft was merely by the tempting appearance of the article.

In a perfect torture of mind, I went on to C—. I was nearly crazy. I was not exactly culpable, yet I bitterly reproached myself for having stayed at Warwick at all. I should have gone on. I arrived at C— at noon. I was nearly sick. I went to the Adelphi. The clerk told me that a lady awaited me in the drawing-room.

The d—l take the lady! However, I went and peeped in. It was Katie. She was pale. She heard my step, and she jumped to her feet.

"O Henry! Henry! did you meet with a disaster?"

I could not speak. I bowed my head. I saw utter ruin for both her and myself in what had happened.

"But here are your diamonds!"

She produced my bag, and thrust the handle into my hand. I was stupefied, tongue-tied, astounded. I almost fainted with the rush of thoughts. She took my hand and led me to a seat.

"I was afraid, Henry dear. I knew you were running a risk, and I don't know what made me do it. But I bought an-

other bag, like yours, then I stuffed the handle full of beads, and exchanged them while we were waiting for the cars to start; then I telegraphed in the name of the firm to Warwick, and then I came direct to C—; and here are the diamonds."

I was overpowered. I could not speak. What a girl this was for a wife! The robbery appeared in all the papers, together

with a large amount of praise for the shrewdness of the clerk. Katie and I kept the secret, and the firm, full of admiration for me, at once promoted me, and Katie and I were married in a month. I did a service for them two weeks after, which was as valuable as the one Katie did; so we shall never tell what we know.

# KITTY'S STRATAGEM.

MRS. ELLEN M MITCHELL

*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Oct 1872; 36, 4; American Periodicals*

pg. 330

## KITTY'S STRATAGEM.

BY MRS. ELLEN M. MITCHELL.

SUCH a little witch as she was, this Kitty Day of whom I write! She couldn't help flirting if she tried, and it wasn't her fault, of course, if men were taken in by the round childish face and great innocent blue eyes. For they were, scores of them, and Kitty went on her way rejoicing, completing their bewilderment by the shy looks, and smiles, and blushes that really meant nothing, but were very effective, nevertheless.

But in an unlucky hour for Kitty, she said "Yes" to a dark fierce-looking young man who had been her shadow for months. She wasn't in earnest, but did it for the "fun of the thing," and because she wanted to know how it felt to be "engaged." It resulted seriously, however, for in spite of her express commands to the contrary, the accepted suitor went directly to her father and told him all about it.

Mr. Day looked at his daughter mischiev-

ously that night as she sat behind the tea-table with such a comical assumption of dignity.

"So I'm to lose my little housekeeper before long, am I?" questioned he, significantly.

"Why, papa, what do you mean?" And Kitty blushed scarlet.

"Mr. Gilbert called on me to-day. He is an excellent young man, and the son of one of my oldest friends. I heartily approve your choice, my dear."

"He promised to keep the engagement a secret," said Kitty, in a vexed tone.

"So he told me; but concluded afterwards to break his promise rather than act dishonorably. For it wouldn't have been quite fair to have concealed the engagement from me."

"I don't know why, I'm sure. It's only a bit of my fun, anyway. I never meant to marry him."

Mr. Day looked at her severely.

"I'm not jesting," she added, pettishly. "He threw himself into such a passion that I was fairly frightened into saying 'Yes,' and sorry enough I've been for it since."

"Are you in earnest, Kitty?"

"Yes, I am." And the blue eyes flashed defiantly.

"Is it possible that a daughter of mine has so little feeling and principle?"

"Now, papa, what is the use of lecturing? You know me of old. I'm in trouble and want you to help me out of it."

"But you've given your word, Kitty, and must abide by it."

"Didn't he break his?"

"Yes, and was justified in doing so. But you are not. Still I'll give you a choice of two evils, if you think marrying young Gilbert one. Few girls would. Either keep your promise and make the best of circumstances, or break it and pass the winter in the country with your Aunt Dorothy. For I'm not going to have you play fast and loose with men's hearts after this fashion."

Kitty looked up into her father's face disbelievingly, but determination was written there, and filled with sudden dismay, she began to plead for a reprieve of the sentence.

But Mr. Day wouldn't listen. "You can stay in the city and participate in its gayeties on one condition only, and that I've mentioned," said he.

"Was there ever anything so provoking?" muttered Kitty, after her father had gone down town. "Aunt Dorothy lives in a forlorn-looking old place, and it's a perfect wilderness all around her, and papa knows that she's the crossest old maid in existence. But I'll be even with him yet."

The next morning Kitty announced her intention of remaining in the city.

"But, papa, if Mr. Gilbert himself shall grow tired of the engagement, after knowing me better, you'll not punish me for that, will you?" And her eyes twinkled mischievously.

"Certainly not, child. What a question to ask!"

But Kitty had a motive for it. A plan had suggested itself to her mind, for outwitting both father and lover. But she didn't mean to hurry, and began to pave the way for its success cautiously.

As good luck would have it, who should call on her that morning but cousin Joe, the firm ally and abettor of all her childish mischief, and as ready to help her now as then.

"O Joe! such trouble as I'm in!" And she clasped her hands with a pretty little gesture of appeal.

"What now, Kitty? Is your canary bird fractions, or is it something about a new dress or bonnet that doesn't equal your expectations?"

Kitty looked at him so reproachfully, that he was sobered in a minute.

"Tell me all about it," whispered he.

"I'm engaged!" And if she'd been announcing her own funeral, she couldn't have done it in a more solemn voice.

Joe flushed up to the roots of his hair, and clasped and unclasped his hands in a nervous sort of way, but didn't say anything.

Kitty watched him maliciously.

"It's to that young Gilbert. He's a splendid fellow, and has great dark eyes, and the dearest little mustache. You know him, don't you?"

"No—yes—a little," stammered Joe, to the delight of his listener. "But what's the trouble about? Wont your father consent?" And he looked so utterly wretched, that Kitty, with a faint twinge of remorse, hastened to tell him the true state of the case.

He brightened up wonderfully.

"Then you don't love the man, after all?" he asked.

"Well, I don't know," she answered, meditatively; "I never looked into the matter much. I suppose he's as good as any one, but I'm not in a marrying mood at present."

Joe's countenance fell again.

"Will you tell me just what you want?" said he, a little sternly.

"Now don't be cross, Joe, you're the only friend I have in the world." And Kitty raised her soft eyes imploringly.

He was mollified at once.

"Why not break with Gilbert and accept the alternative?" suggested he. "Twont be so very dull at Aunt Dorothy's. I've a college friend in the neighborhood, and can visit you occasionally."

Poor Joe! the idea of having her all to himself was delightful, and he waited for her answer with subdued eagerness.

"Is that the only plan that has occurred to you?" answered Kitty, sarcastically. "You haven't much ingenuity if you can't devise some other way of getting me out of this dilemma. I've no intention of becoming an animated fossil. Now listen to what I propose."

Then Kitty disclosed her plot, and Joe

listened approvingly, and the two heads were still bent close together when young Gilbert called an hour later. He entered unannounced, and Kitty gave such a start and blush at sight of him that Joe's hopes again sank to zero. But if he'd been sensible, he would have known that her embarrassment was the result of surprise rather than emotion.

She was very arch and winning that morning until after Joe left (the little witch knew he was on nettles all the time), then she changed her tactics and grew cold and distant.

"So you had to tell papa, after all?" she sneered. "Men can't keep a secret."

Her lover tried to explain, but she wouldn't listen, and gave him such a rating as would have done credit to the shillest and noisiest of viragoes.

"Is this a specimen of her temper?" thought he, escaping into the street as soon as possible. "Who'd have thought her soft eyes could flash so, or the lines of her face sharpen in such a curious way? She really looked dangerous."

Had he seen Kitty laugh and clap her hands as he vanished from the scene, he would have been more puzzled than ever.

The next time they met she greeted him with such a charming smile, and looked so naive and unconscious, that this little episode would have passed from his memory, if it hadn't been for one circumstance.

He accidentally (?) overheard a conversation between her cousin and another gentleman. Kitty was the theme of discourse.

"She's a dear little girl, but a regular *virago*!" said Joe. "Everybody's afraid of her when she gets into one of her tantrums. She just raves and goes on in a way that's perfectly frightful. There's a taint of insanity in the blood, you know; her aunt and grandmother died in a lunatic asylum."

Young Gilbert listened, shudderingly. These words explained the scene that had puzzled him before, and awakened forebodings for the future.

"You saw her father come down town last week with his head all bandaged up, and heard him tell, perhaps, how terribly he's afflicted with neuralgia," continued Joe. "Poor old gentleman! 'twas Kitty did the mischief, for in one of her angry fits she threw a flat-iron across the table, and it hit him in the temple. He's anxious enough to marry her off, and I hear Gilbert's to be the happy man."

That individual turned pale. He remembered Mr. Day's eagerness in forwarding his suit, and the wish he had expressed that his daughter's marriage should take place at an early date. Though his love for Kitty was as strong as his shallow nature was capable of feeling, a vixenish wife would be unendurable. But wasn't it possible that her cousin was mistaken, or had colored the picture too highly? He resolved to wait for further developments.

They came speedily. A week later he called on Kitty, just at dark, and was ushered by mistake (?) into the library. The door between that and the dining-room stood slightly ajar; a woman's shrill voice reached him from there. Was it Kitty's? he recognized it; he had heard it once before, pitched in the same high key.

"Don't tell me you didn't mean to," she screeched, more like a mad woman, than anything else. "You did, you did, you little brat!" Then there was the sound of a heavy blow and the shriek of a child.

"O don't, don't, Miss Kitty," wailed a pitiful little voice. "'Twas so dark I couldn't see when you run up against me, and then I stumbled and fell, and the pitcher got broken, and I tried to keep the milk off your pretty dress, but couldn't."

"You stumbled and fell," mimicked Kitty. "I'll teach you not to another time. Take that—and that—and that!" giving the child blow after blow that resounded through the room. "Stop your snivelling, too. Do you hear? I'll make you, if you don't."

The sobs were hushed up, and Kitty went on:

"'Twas the prettiest dress I had, and 'tis spoilt completely, all through your carelessness, you little imp! O, if I'd only a raw hide, 'twould do me good to give you just such a whipping as you deserve."

"Kitty, let that child alone!" said a new voice, and Gilbert recognized it as her cousin's.

"I shall do no such thing. Get out of the way, and mind your own business!" she shrieked, and there was something that sounded like a bottle whizzing through the room and crashing up against the wall. Then a man's groan was heard distinctly.

"O Kitty! how could you?" said her cousin, reproachfully. "You've cut my cheek terribly. See how the blood runs!"

Gilbert didn't wait to hear any more, but fled from the house, resolved that he wouldn't

marry such a vixen, though she had the face and form of a Hebe.

The front door had no sooner closed upon him than the actors in the above drama went off into spasms of merriment. Kitty stood revealed in the gaslight with dress uninjured; there was not a cut to be seen on Joe's face; the child was nowhere visible.

"O! O! 'twas too funny!" gasped Kitty. "That whine would have deceived anybody, 'twas so natural. I half started myself, thinking 'twas really a child's voice, instead of yours. You deserve a reward of merit for such splendid acting."

"Give me one, then, and let me choose it myself," whispered Joe.

"Well, what will you have?" And Kitty looked up archly.

"Yourself?"

"What a modest demand!"

There was a mocking smile on her lips, but her eyes fell beneath his.

"Do you think so?" And taking the mischievous little face between his hands, he scanned it closely.

What he saw there was evidently satisfactory, for he kissed it over and over, and Kitty, though she resisted a little at first, finally submitted with a very good grace.

"'Tis well to be off with the old love before you are on with the new," whispered he, slyly. "Gilbert's done for, and I've stepped into his place."

"But he didn't treat me this way," pouted she.

"I hope not. 'Twould be worse for him if he had. I'd shoot him in a minute!" And Joe tried to look belligerent, but failed woefully.

Mr. Day was surprised the next morning by a call from Kitty's late suitor. The young man seemed ill at ease, and stammered a great deal in making his errand known.

"I understand, sir, that insanity is hereditary in your family," he began, awkwardly, "and—and—" he paused and tried to col-

lect his ideas—"that Kitty's aunt and grandmother died in a lunatic asylum."

"All a mistake," responded Mr. Day, pompously. "There was never a case of insanity, neither among my own kindred, nor that of my late wife's."

"But your daughter, sir, has a peculiar disposition, and I find it isn't suited to mine. We should be miserable together. I desire, therefore, to withdraw from the engagement."

"And have you told her this?" thundered his listener, white with rage. For Mr. Day really had a violent temper, and didn't need to feign its possession, like Kitty.

"Dear me! the father is worse than the daughter," thought the young man. Aloud, he answered, "O no! I came to you first. (The fact was, he didn't dare face Kitty with any such proposition.)

"Well, sir, all I have to say, is, that you are a mean, contemptible villain! and if you don't get out of my office this minute, I'll kick you down stairs!" And before the words were fairly out of Mr. Day's mouth, he started to make his threat good.

Young Gilbert made a precipitous retreat, convinced that both Kitty and Mr. Day were partially insane.

Kitty listened demurely to her father's version of the affair, and the anathemas he hurled against her recreant lover. Once, though, during the narration, she shook so with laughter that he looked at her suspiciously. But she put on at once such an air of wretchedness, that he ascribed it to mortification and wounded pride.

It was not until two years afterward that he learned the truth, and Kitty was then married to Joe, who, I forgot to say, was not her own cousin, though she called him so, but a sort of distant relative. Mr. Day received the revelation good-humoredly (Joe had always been his special favorite), and was ready enough to laugh with the rest, over the way he had been outwitted.



# LADY LYTTON'S TRAP.

Bishop, Maria J

*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Jan 1871; 33, 1; American Periodicals pg. 83*

# LADY LYTTON'S TRAP.

BY MARIA J. BISHOP.

"For three long days, *Regina Mia*, I leave you. The Moors, at my friend's, Sir Edwards, are too tempting for me to refuse. Bertold will obey orders, and guard my treasure till my return." He stopped, as he spoke, and imprinted a kiss on the fair white forehead, framed in by the wealth of golden hair which fell over the beautiful face.

"O Arthur, *must* you leave me? There is something dreary about this old mansion; and, besides, my heart has a strange misgiving, an undefined fear. *Must* you go?"

"Yes, for a few hours," returned the baronet, laughing. "It will be pleasant to know my lady looks for my return. *Adieu!*"

The long corridor which separated her apartment rung to the proud step, a distant door opened and shut, and she was alone.

"How strangely nervous I do feel to-night," she said, ringing for her maid; "I wish Arthur would have delayed his journey."

"Your ladyship's pleasure," said the girl, entering.

"Lizette, place that cabinet and writing materials in my dressing-room. No, I shall not require your attendance," she said, as the girl reluctantly withdrew.

Lest alone, she undid the heavy coil of her hair that fell in a golden haze around her, seating herself before a large mirror. In a

moment the tramp of a horse in the paved court, and Lady Lytton sprang towards the window to take one farewell look of her lord. One step she made, only one, for distinctly seen beneath the heavy curtain was a naked human foot!

Her first impulse was to scream; her next to scan her terrible situation.

"O, that she had not sent away Lizette!" she thought. She was in a distant wing of a rambling old house, and her cries might fail to reach the servants' ears. For one instant she stood spellbound; the next, with woman's fortitude, she had formed her plan.

Humming a wild Scottish air that would least betray the trembling tone of terror, she turned again to the mirror, placing it so as to command the dreaded window. Pale with fright, she drew her fingers several times through the shining mass of her rich hair, then, muttering, "I wonder if Lizette placed the jewels rightly," she drew from the small cabinet a necklace of pearl.

"My bridal gift!" she continued, drawing the sparkling gems through her fingers, in full view of the curtain-concealed figure; "and this ruby, my Bertha's parting gift!"

For half an hour she continued to polish and arrange the gems, wondering if the loud throbbing of her heart was audible to her

dreaded guest. At length, seeming weary, she placed the cabinet, half open, on a small table, in the inner apartment, leaving the lamp in such a direction that its light was reflected in the sparkling treasure; then wrapping a mantle around her, she flung herself upon the bed with an agonizing fear that she should never leave it.

Twelve, one, two tolled from the distant tower, and still Lady Lytton watched and trembled.

All was still in the mansion. O, that Sir Henry might return! Would Lizette kindly disobey her orders and come? No, all was still—still as the death that awaited her.

Hark, the horrible curtain moved! no, 'twas the wind. O merciful saints! it does move though! and a dark form slowly emerged, with a creaking tread, and stole towards the bed. Lady Lytton closed her eyes, feigning the calm breath of sleep. A man stood beside her; he bent and watched the beautiful sleeper, and, through the long lashes, she beheld the gleaming knife of the assassin.

"She's pretty and kind," he whispered; "pity to kill her. Now, birdie, an ye value your pretty throat, sleep sound."

He turned and with a gliding step sought the inner closet, where he bent over the table. Lady Lytton half raised her head—

would he look round? No, drawn by the beauty of the gems, he was intently busied in the casket. Now was the time, or never.

With a nervous spring she bounded to the door and seized the latch. The robber saw her, and in an instant he too had gained the door; and now began the deadly struggle between man's strength and woman's agony.

She had almost closed the door when he grasped it, and nearly escaped her hold. It opened wider and wider. Their eyes met. It was Bertold the steward.

Summoning every nerve, she exhausted herself in one effort. The bolt shut with a loud click, mingled with the curses of the robber, and with one wild frenzied scream, she sunk to the floor. The sun had long gleamed over the towers of Lytton Hall when she opened her eyes. A piercing shriek bespoke first her consciousness, which hushed as she beheld Sir Henry and her faithful Lizette bending over her. With a terrified glance she looked toward the closet.

"Safe, my dear; your captive is safe, and shall answer for all he has made you suffer."

"Spare the miscreant, Henry."

"Forgive me, love, if even your prayers are unavailing here. He shall hang if there is justice in England; but for the present he is safe with the *bait* you set for him in your trap."

# LAUGHING-EYES.

CLARA LE CLERC

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pg. 131*

## LAUGHING-EYES.

BY CLARA LE CLERC.

THERE was a timid rap at the door, and Paul Winship sang out, "Come in!" as he changed his right knee to his left, and elevated the latter to the window sill. A handsome, roguish-looking young M. D. was this same Paul Winship, and he thought so too, for he glanced complacently into the mirror opposite, which graced his neat little reception-room, and indolently running the long white fingers of one hand through his nut-brown curls, with the other removing a fragrant Havana from his handsome mouth, shaded by a heavy mustache of similar shade to his hair, as he muttered, *sotto voce*, "Who the deuce is it? why don't they come in? Come in!" This in reply to a second rap somewhat bolder than the first.

"I can't open the door!" came the reply, in a sweet birdlike voice.

"Humph!" and, letting himself down from his comfortable position, Dr. Paul Winship strode across the room, and rather ungraciously opened the door.

A wee little sprite, of eight or ten, stood upon the landing.

"Please, sir, is Dr. Winship at home?" And two little hands pushed back the yellow tangled curls from a bright earnest face, and a pair of deep blue-gray eyes—laughing, witching eyes—gazed up into Paul Winship's face.

"Yes, little one, I am Dr. Winship." And Paul led the child into the warm room, which somehow grew brighter and more comfortable from the little one's presence.

"You Dr. Winship—Dr. Paul Winship? I thought you were ever so much older than you are!" This was said by the little fairy, as she stood before the glowing grate, holding her tiny hands to the cheerful blaze.

"Ah, you did? Here, sit down in this large chair and put your little feet to the fire. There! now you are all right," as he lifted the small figure and seated it within the huge armchair, while he drew another to her side. "And so you thought me an old man, did you?" he asked, rather amused at the idea, as he leaned forward, and removed the overshoes from the smallest of feet.

"Well, yes," answered the little lady, in a

very matter-of-fact way, as she leaned back and untied the ribbons of her pretty blue silk hood. "How cold it is to-day! and how pleasant and warm it seems in here after being out."

Paul sat and watched the bright face with its cunning little mouth and beautiful eyes.

"What is your name, my dear?"

"O yes, I had almost forgotten what I came for, I was so surprised at seeing you so young. I thought the old gentleman I have so often seen by this window, and walking about in your pretty garden, must be Dr. Winship. Who is he?" And the great blue-gray eyes gazed inquiringly into Paul Winship's face.

"He is my uncle—also Dr. Winship—but his health is so feeble that he does not practise. But you haven't told me your name yet." And the doctor laughed pleasantly.

"Indeed, and I haven't; my name is 'Laughing-Eyes,' and I live over there in *that* house;" pointing, as she spoke, to a beautiful Italian-like villa.

"Ah, indeed!"—Paul had often wondered who were the occupants of that pretty little Eden—"But what a queer name yours is—'Laughing-Eyes.'"

"Yes, poor papa gave me that name before he went over the great ocean in his big ship; but he never came back again, and so mamma dear calls me her 'Laughing-Eyes' all the while. But, Dr. Winship, I called on *bushness* this morning!" And the eyes actually laughed in Paul Winship's face. "I should be ashamed! Poor Tom! suffering all this time. You see, our Tom has broken his leg, and I told mamma I was coming right after you; and they all—Grandma, Uncle Charlie and mamma—laughed, and said you would not set Tom's leg. But you will, wont you, doctor?" And both little hands were placed upon his knee, and Laughing-Eyes looked beseechingly into his face.

"Of course, I'll go with you and set Tom's leg." And Dr. Winship hastily enveloped himself in his overcoat, drew on overshoes and gloves, and taking a small case of instruments in one hand, and his hat in the other, pronounced himself ready.

"O, I am so glad, so glad! You are a dear

good doctor!" These and various other ejaculations were made by Laughing-Eyes, as she made herself ready for her walk home.

"There, mamma! I told you so—I told you that Dr. Winship would come!"

Laughing-Eyes called out these words with a triumphant ring in her voice, as she threw open the door to a beautiful morning-room, all aglow with crimson hangings and rare paintings; singing canaries in the gilded cages, and stands of fragrant heliotrope and geranium within the alcoves.

The three occupants of the room—two ladies and a gentleman, the former engaged in some pretty worsted work, and the latter reading aloud—started at the ringing tones, and turned hastily. The gentleman arose and came forward, greeting the young physician in a very courteous manner; then, turning to the ladies, introduced them as, "My mother, Mrs. Graham, my sister, Mrs. English."

Both of the ladies bowed politely at the introduction; and the gentleman conducted Dr. Winship to a chair near the sparkling fire.

"Be seated, Dr. Winship; our Laughing-Eyes is quite a naughty girl to bring you out on such a morning."

"Yes, but, Uncle Charlie, have you no feeling? Poor Tom! think of his suffering. I know he will be glad enough that I sent for the doctor, and will thank me too!"

"Is any one seriously hurt?" asked Paul Winship, in his most winning tones.

At these words a funny little smile fluttered about the lips of the gentleman and elderly lady; while a clear silvery laugh issued from the rosy lips of the younger—almost a child herself—with her yellow-brown hair clustering about her neck in feathery ringlets, and her great gray eyes filled with laughing light.

"O, you naughty Laughing-Eyes! What am I ever to do with you?" she exclaimed, as the little sprite addressed seated herself demurely upon the sofa by her side.

"Well, mamma, did you think I would let Tom lie here and die, if the rest of you were willing? no indeed! Come, doctor, are you ready?"

"Where is the patient?" inquired Dr. Paul, beginning to think this an exceedingly queer family—one lying with a broken leg, and all the rest laughing at his sufferings, all but one, and that a wee sprite of a child, with great laughing blue-gray eyes.

"I shall go and bring him to you, Dr. Winship," was the reply of the child, as she hastily moved towards the door.

"Laughing-Eyes, Laughing-Eyes, you will do no such thing, my dear!" exclaimed the beautiful girlish-looking creature upon the sofa.

"O yes, but I must, dear mamma!" And the beautiful child, with her laughing eyes, made her way out of the room with a very important air.

"Dr. Winship," began the gentleman, in a grave tone, though the same queer smile lurked about the corners of his handsome mouth, "I fear that our Laughing-Eyes—naughty pet that she is—has played a sad trick upon you. A great favorite of hers has had the misfortune to get his leg broken, and nothing would do but she must go for a doctor to set it. We did all in our power to dissuade her, but no; she has always had her way, and would not yield in this instance."

"Quite right, the little lady was quite right; of course, it would be very wrong to permit one of our kind to suffer with a broken limb and do nothing for his relief!"

"But, Dr. Winship, Dr. Winship!" chimed in the silvery voice of the bewitching creature upon the sofa; "can't you see that it is not—O dear, that child! whatever am I to do with my Laughing-Eyes?—Dr. Winship, 'tis no person at all, only—only a—"

"Here he is, doctor," came in the birdlike voice of Laughing-Eyes, at his side; and turning his eyes from the beautiful face of the mother, he beheld the daughter, bearing in her arms a large willow basket, and upon a nice warm bed of cotton reposed a huge Maltese cat! "This is our Tom!" And the child's eyes laughed roguishly in the young man's face.

For one moment Paul Winship's handsome face was clouded, as his sensitive nature, for that brief space, imagined an insult; but his sunny heart soon rolled the mist of doubt and distrust away, as he looked upon the faces of those around him.

"Dr. Winship, you will not be offended!" pleaded the soft sweet voice of Mrs. English, as she came to his side, and, resting her beautiful little hand upon his arm, looked beseechingly in his face.

"Offended, madam! No indeed; though the little midget here did play quite a high hand. I imagined some member of the family was seriously hurt, and was moved greatly by her pathetic pleading."

"Yes, she said that she knew the old gray-haired gentleman could not resist her coaxing and pleading. 'I'll bring him, mamma, never fear.' And her Uncle Charlie told her if she could prevail upon Dr. Winship to come with her and set a cat's leg, that he would give her a handsome victorine and muff for this winter. So you see how determined the little witch was. You will excuse it, doctor, will you not?"

And Paul Winship imagined that the great gray eyes put off their laughing, and clothed themselves in a loving, pleading glance; any way, his gray-brown eyes looked away down into their glowing depths, and a delicious thrill passed over his being. The sweet face of the widow grew rosy, the long lashes drooped, hiding the witching splendor of her eyes, as she turned away with modest grace, and, having sought a low chair within an alcove, busied herself seemingly with her bright roses that she was weaving into the dark velvet. But the roses in her cheeks outrivalled the glowing ones she was forming upon the rich ottoman.

"Doctor, aren't you going to set Tom's leg? why are you watching mamma so closely? she is not mad at me, for all her cheeks are so red. Are you, mamma dear?"

And the little girl placed her basket upon the floor, and, hastening to her mother's side, wound her arms caressingly about her neck.

"Kiss Laughing-Eyes, and make up, little mamma, if you think it was wrong to bring the doctor to set Tom's leg."

Paul Winship, while this little scene was being enacted, thought it best to come out of the clouds, for he had been sailing away among the bright golden clouds of Love-Land, since the touch of that little hand upon his arm, and his glance within those deep beautiful eyes; so, with a mighty effort of the will, the spell was broken; and, bending over the basket upon the floor, he called pleasantly to the little girl, yet at her mother's side, "Come, Miss Laughing-Eyes, if you will get me my case of instruments in the hall, I shall proceed to perform this surgical operation."

"Do you mean by that, Dr. Winship, that you are going to set poor Tom's leg for me?" And the sprite, with her laughing eyes, at once left the girl-mother, and hastened to bend over the basket with the young physician. "But you will need other things, won't you?" and the child peered into his face with her winning smile.

"Yes, *ma petite*, splints and bandages."

"O, Uncle Charlie is always whittling, he can get the splints; and mamma will look in her work-basket for bandages, while I run for the case." And in a twinkling the little feet made the journey down the stairs and back again.

"There, now, everything is ready." And amid much laughing, and a great many funny sayings from the doctor and Uncle Charlie, they proceeded to make poor Tom's leg right.

Mrs. Graham looked on, now and then making some pleasant remark. Mrs. English seated herself schoolgirl fashion upon the floor, and held poor kitty Tom on her lap during the painful setting of the limb, while Uncle Charlie gave his assistance to the doctor; and Laughing-Eyes stood by with clasped hands, and watched the whole affair with great satisfaction.

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"There goes a perfect gentleman!" remarked Mrs. Graham, as the door closed upon Paul Winship, who was escorted to the hall door by her son Charlie.

Mrs. English offered no response to this remark; her crimson lips were slightly apart, her graceful head inclined, and her eyes fixed intently upon the door which had closed upon the young physician. Her hand yet quivered with the pressure his had imparted when he bade her farewell; her eyes seemed filled with a sweet expression, that once seen, is never to be forgotten.

"A perfect gentleman, did you say, grandma?" spoke up the elf, bending over the basket containing her pet; "indeed, he is—my Dr. Paul. How like a prince in the fairy tale he looked, as Uncle Charlie asked him what remuneration he required for his services. Remuneration means pay, don't it, mamma?" And the child turned her eyes upon her mother; but she seemed not to hear the question. "Say, mamma!" No answer. "Well, he wouldn't take any money, any how; Uncle Charlie had to put up his purse when he said, with that sweet voice of his, 'I shall settle my bill with Miss Laughing-Eyes, sometime in the future.' I wonder what he meant?"

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"So beautiful, so bewitching! Did I ever see grace and beauty so perfectly combined before?" and Paul Winship walked to and fro the length of his private room. "So young, so lovely; a widow and a mother, and she can't possibly be more than five and

twenty; and I am twenty-one; not much difference. I think I shall—O heavens! her eyes—those lovely magnetic eyes—I feel their power yet! Well, well, Paul Winship, you are done for. In love with a widow, blessed with an encumbrance in the shape of a little witching elf, which promises to be more beautiful even than the mother. A widow, some half dozen years your senior! Heigh ho! I wonder if Laughing-Eyes would call me papa as sweetly as she says mamma?"

These and many other like rhapsodies fell from the young physician's lips, after his return from the pretty little home he had so often called Eden, without once imagining the youth, beauty and grace enshrined within its walls.

"Ha! ha! And I'm a *cat*-doctor! Blessings on that cat! I think I shall call to-morrow to ask after the health of my patient, and then—ah, one more look into the glowing face and heavenly eyes of *ma belle* English. Perhaps, then, she may invite me to call. Young Graham was exceedingly polite this morning, and I shall venture once upon the strength of his assurance of a pleasant welcome. The daughter has the mother's eyes with this difference: the daughter's are filled with silent laughter—witching, cunning, tantalizing eyes in one so young. The mother's are filled with the silent language of love—laughing, joyous love—winning, pleading to fill the loving heart. Can she be mine? will she be mine?"

And Paul Winship stopped in his walk and leaned against the window. The blinds had not yet been closed for the night, and he stood gazing upon the little Eden opposite. Presently he saw lights spring up as if by magic and illumine the fairy-like place. By-and-by a slight girlish figure approached the window, pushed aside the heavy damask hangings, and looked out upon the night. Paul's breath came in quick pants from his deep manly breast, for he recognized the beautiful form and more beautiful face of his fair enchantress of the morning. Five, ten minutes she stood thus, with her pure sweet face pressed close to the window, gazing out upon the moonlight and silent stars; then a servant came to close the outer blinds, and Mrs. English, dropping the curtains into place, left the window; and with a quivering sigh Paul also turned and once more resumed his walk through the room; and as he did so, he was silly enough to repeat some pretty lines all about "hair with its tinge of gold,"

"priceless heart of wealth untold," "eyes of matchless splendor" "keeping their watch by the great bay-window," etc., etc. Foolish boy!

The next day, as the bright January sun came shimmering in through the crimson curtains, making fantastic rays of gold and crimson upon the rich carpet; and the birds and flowers were all striving with each other in their efforts to add beauty to the room; while Laughing-Eyes sat upon the rug before the glowing fire, her pretty babylike feet resting upon the hearth, her great laughing eyes watching her poor lame cat, as he rested in his soft bed; and her mamma, bright, bewitching, clad in a soft merino robe of most delicate hue, with dainty little frills and flutings of snowy white about the fair throat and little wrists, sat near the window with her pretty bright worsteds in her lap; and just as the tiny little ormolu clock upon the mantle chimed twelve, a servant announced, "Dr. Winship!"

Mrs. English arose and received the young physician in a graceful, fascinating way, while Laughing-Eyes, bright, piquant and merry as a bird, sprang from her position before the fire, and ran to him with both hands extended.

"O you dear good Dr. Paul! May I call you 'Dr. Paul?'" asked the little fairy, clinging to him with her trusting hands.

"Indeed, you may, Miss Laughing-Eyes," answered Dr. Paul, as he politely accepted the vacant place upon the sofa, to which the young widow gracefully invited him.

"Don't call me miss, please; just call me 'Laughing-Eyes,' as little mamma does." And the sweet child nestled close to Paul Winship's side and looked winningly into his face.

"Very well, 'Laughing-Eyes' it shall be." Then, turning to the beautiful mother, he made some remark suitable to the occasion.

Of course, after a short while, Laughing-Eyes brought the basket forward that the young man might examine into the welfare of his patient.

"Ah, Master Tom, you are progressing finely"—after a brief examination of his ease. "He will soon be following you around, *ma mignonne*," he continued, pleasantly, placing his shapely white hand upon the bright yellow curls of the child at his side.

At the close of his visit Mrs. English laughingly reminded him that his patient would require visits for some time yet, and gave

him her pretty little hand, at parting, with a sudden uplifting of the glorious gray eyes; then the white lids with their heavy brown fringes shut in their mystic splendor.

Laughing-Eyes conducted him to the hall door; then, bidding him "wait one minute," she left him standing upon the marble steps of the veranda, admiring the pretty grounds, but soon her dainty little feet, which seemed scarcely to touch the floor, brought her to his side, and, tying on her pretty hood, she announced that she was "going to walk to the gate with her Dr. Paul."

That visit was but the beginning of many others. The dreary days of winter lost all their sombre hues when Paul found himself within the room with crimson hangings, the favorite haunt of mother and child. "Tis true, now and then, he was "made company of," as Laughing-Eyes expressed it, and was entertained in the elegant parlor and drawing-room; but when no other visitors were present, he entreated to be conducted to the family sitting-room.

Winter's icy fetlocks melted away before the genial spring sun, and wind, and fragrant flowers, singing birds and sunny days came back to gladden old Mother Nature. The bright days of spring followed each other in quick succession. Why is it that Time so swiftly plies his gleaming sickle while the heart revels in love's first dream? Summer, with its fervid heats and cooling shades, followed upon young spring's retreating steps. The room, with its crimson adornings, was often deserted by two members of the "family party;" and out upon the veranda, pacing to and fro in the summer moonlight, might be seen Dr. Paul and Mrs. English; or, again, wandering amid the labyrinth of fragrant flowers which sent up their nightly incense beneath the faint stars and mystic moon, they would find themselves sitting together beneath the swaying vines of the star-jasmine and honeysuckle which shaded the pretty little rustic arbor.

At such times his voice came thrillingly sweet upon the silence, and her beautiful eyes glowed and sparkled in the dusky light like twin stars peering through the twilight from the fair face of the heaven-land. Both little hands nestled confidingly in the clasp of one strong white hand, while the other arm found it necessary to press the dear wee figure nearer, so the bright head might rest upon his shoulder, and his fingers play amid her curls.

"Twas sitting thus, they mutually confessed their love, and spoke of the past—her sad past—when her gallant sailor husband left her never to return; her Willie, of bold and noble daring, and a heart as true as the stars,

"Five long years have I walked alone, dear Paul, ever with love and reverence in my heart for my lost love. And I love him yet love him with a love I can never give to you, my poor boy." And the beautiful creature raised her bright head from its resting-place upon his shoulder, and, with the tears like diamond drops glistening upon her long lashes, she held up her rosebud of a mouth for a kiss, whispering, "But I do love you, Paul; I cannot tell why, and yet—yet—I do not think we shall ever join hands to walk together until 'Death us do part.'"

"My darling, my darling! Why let these forebodings crowd upon your sunny heart? Come, *ma belle*, let me kiss those glistening drops away."

And where is our sprite—our bewitching Laughing-Eyes—all these long bright summer days and beautiful nights? A change had come over the child. She no longer ran to meet her Dr. Paul, no longer nestled at his knee to be petted and caressed. She roamed through the garden, with her old pet Tom by her side, or sat for hours in the very arbor of green-swaying vines which offered so charming a retreat to the lovers upon the evening of their mutual confessions. The child held long talks with her old favorite—though she did all the talking—and Dr. Paul was generally the subject of these conversations.

"I did not think he would treat us so; did you, Pussy Tom? I thought he loved us. I called him a dear *good* doctor, and loved him so much; but he don't love poor Laughing-Eyes any more; he thinks only of being with little mamma. I wanted Dr. Paul for my own dear good doctor always; and Tom, then I thought when I should be a lady and we should be married—Dr. Paul and I—you should have a home with us, Tom; and if you should break your leg, ever so many times, it would make no difference, for would not my Dr. Paul be right there to set it? Ah, poor Tom! poor Laughing-Eyes! he has forgotten us both." And the tears would drop upon pussy's soft fur, as he lay cradled in the arms of his little mistress.

No one seemed to notice the child much in those days. Uncle Charlie was carrying on a vigorous courting campaign with a fas-

cinating belle over the way—a young girl, with flashing black eyes and hair like the raven's wing—and grandma had gone visiting some of her friends in the country, so poor Laughing-Eyes was left to her own amusements; which, in one usually so full of light, love and laughter, seemed rather queer.

One night—I am almost certain it was the identical one above-mentioned, when Dr. Paul Winship gathered sunny-haired Florence English to his heart, and called her “darling,” kissing the tears from the most beautiful eyes in the world, save one pair—Laughing-Eyes had curled herself down upon one of the little willow forms in the arbor, where, completely hidden by the clinging and swaying vines, she and kitty Tom fell asleep. By-and-by she dreamed she heard the sound of voices; one was that of her Dr. Paul, and the other—yes, she was sure of it—the other that of little mamma. And by-and-by the little one dreamed, with her ears and eyes open, and the whole scene was fixed upon the childish heart and brain.

Poor desolate little heart!

An hour or two later, as Paul Winship, after escorting his betrothed to the door and bidding her good-night with an affectionate caress, turned his lingering steps towards the gate, he imagined he heard a faint sob from the arbor. Yes, he was sure of it, as he lifted the trailing vines, and stood upon the soft carpet of moss. But at first he saw nothing, then looking closely he saw something white gleaming through the leafy covering, and pushing aside the mass of green beheld Laughing-Eyes so intent upon her sobbing and nursing her childish sorrow, that she knew nothing of his presence. Tom discovered him, however, and gave a mew and purr of recognition, as he sprang into the young man's arms. Laughing-Eyes raised her little wet face, and gazed upon the intruder with some alarm; but when he seated himself by her side, and placed his arm affectionately about her shoulder, drawing her head to his breast, and spoke to her in his gentle soothing way, asking her, “My little Laughing-Eyes, or rather Crying-Eyes, what is the matter? Who has wounded the sensitive heart of my little one?” she sobbed aloud.

“You, O, you have, Dr. Paul!”

“I have! Why, my child, what have I done?”

“O, everything! I thought you were my own dear Dr. Paul. I thought you loved

your little Laughing-Eyes, and that you would always be true to her, as she will be to you; but no, no!” And the tears came in copious showers, deluging the handsome shirt front of the young physician. “You don't love me any longer; you care for nobody but little mamma!”

“But, dear child, I can love you too, my little pet. There, I never called ‘mamma’ my ‘pet’!”

“Yes, but you called her ‘darling,’” moaned the child, “and kissed her tears away. O, I thought how happy we would be sometime, living all to ourselves—me and my dear Dr. Paul!”

“*Whew!*” whistled the young M. D., under his breath. “This is something not down on the programme. What am I to do in order to quiet this child?” Then addressing the child, “But, little one, you are only a wee child, and Dr. Paul would have to wait ever so many years, and he would be an old man then, and Laughing-Eyes would care nothing for such a rusty, crusty old fellow. You are too young yet for Dr. Paul.”

“But I don't care if I am young; I'm ten years old now, almost, and little mamma is five or six years older than you are, for I heard her talking to grandma one day about you; so you are not so very old now, Dr. Paul.” And the little midget looked up pleadingly into his face.

He took the little tear-stained face between his hands and bent his head to kiss her.

“No, no! you are not mine; you must not kiss me!” And the seemingly heart-broken child turned her head away.

“Well, promise me that you will be a good child, and go to the house now, will you? It is too late for a little mite like you to be out in the night air.” And taking her by the hand he led her gently to the steps, placed his hand caressingly upon the tangled curls, gazed one moment into the beautiful tear-filled eyes with their glistening lashes, and, kissing the little hand he held, whispered softly, “Good-night, my pet!”

“Mamma, O little mamma!” panted the scarlet lips, as Laughing-Eyes ran hastily up the marble steps, her cheeks aglow, her eyes distended with surprise and fear. “O my dear mamma!” she called out again, as she hastened along the veranda to the shaded nook where sat her mother and Dr. Winship. “Somebody is coming! A great tall man, with whiskers all over his face. I was at the gate, playing with kitty Tom, and he came,

and leaning over the paling, asked me my name, and how old I was, and if my mother was at home. And, mamma, he came through the gate, caught me up in his arms and hugged me so tight that I almost screamed; and he kissed me again and again, and called me his 'Laughing-Eyes.' Then I scrambled down and ran to tell you, and—there he is, mamma, coming up the walk!"

During this hurried recital Mrs. English had flushed and paled, clasped her hands over her heart, and listened breathlessly. As the sound of approaching steps came nearer she sprang up, and, with the fleetness of a young fawn, hastened forward to meet the stranger face to face upon the marble steps.

"'Tis he! It is my own, my Willie!" And springing forward she was clasped to the breast of her sailor husband. "The sea has given up its dead! My own, my noble husband, I feel your heart throb, pulsing against my own."

While the excited feelings of the young wife thus found expression in words, the husband—the long lost, now her own again—pressed her yet closer to his manly breast, and a fervent "Thank God!" arose from his full heart.

And all this while Dr. Paul sat spellbound, chained to the spot, and heard the husband, as, gathering his wife yet closer in his strong arms, he seated himself upon the steps and related his adventures upon the broad ocean: How his vessel being wrecked, he and one or two others, who were clinging to a plank—all they had left of his gallant ship—and expecting every moment to be their last, were picked up by a corsair, and for four years he had been confined in a foreign prison; then having escaped, together with his comrades, they procured passage in a vessel bound to South America, and, having reached port, they were all seized with a malignant fever prevailing there, and, after his recovery and safe arrival in the United States, he had searched for his darlings till he had almost despaired.

"But, thank God, we are together at last—husband, wife and child—and nothing but death shall part us again," were his words, as he pressed kiss after kiss upon the pure sweet face resting upon his breast.

With a weary moan—all unheard by the happy pair—Paul Winship arose, and silently let himself down by the marble columns and swaying vines, and made his way home with

an aching heart. How strange it is, in this world of ours, that perfect happiness cannot reign for one brief hour! Paul's heart was weary and sad with his first sorrow, and Captain English and his girl-wife were enjoying their happiest moments.

"I cannot remain here. I must go away; I cannot stay where I can witness her happiness!" muttered Paul Winship, as he stood at the window, watching the noble, manly form of Captain English, and the slight delicate figure at his side, as they paced to and fro the length of the veranda.

A crumpled little note had found its way to Dr. Paul, bearing these words, "Forgive and forget me;" and he had written in reply, "I shall try to obey you."

Since that night they had not met, and Paul deemed it best for him to absent himself, for a time, at least.

In a few days his preparations were completed, and his last night in his old boyhood's home had arrived.

"I must walk by there! I shall make no sign by which they will see or know me." And with a sad air the young physician started out for his last walk by the home of his "first love." Did it prove his last?

"There is the summer-house. Ah! the remembrance of that night of mutual confessions thrills me yet. I must steal in quietly, and rest within the cool retreat once more." And leaping the low iron paling Dr. Paul walked cautiously towards the arbor. Yes, it was vacant; no, he heard a voice saying "He is mine now, kitty Tom. My papa has come back and taken mamma away from him, and now he is mine—my own dear, darling Dr. Paul. O, how we'll love him, pussy, won't we, when we all live over there close to little mamma's? My own dear Paul!"

Leaving the heavy drapery of vines he stood before the little speaker.

"O Dr. Paul! once more you have come to your little Laughing-Eyes." And the child nestled at his side, placing her little hands confidently upon his knee.

How bright, how beautiful she was! All the old archness and laughter had come back to her lovely eyes.

"Yes, my little pet, Dr. Paul has come to bid you good-by." And he gathered the tiny form in his arms, and seated himself upon the willow chair. Two little arms went up and folded themselves about his neck, while a convulsive shudder passed over the small frame.

"Going away! where? For how long?" murmured the sweet voice.

"To Europe. Perhaps I shall not come back in six or even ten years; but you will not forget me, will you, my pet? You will not forget your Paul, and be glad to have him come back to you? Look into my eyes and say 'I shall never forget you, Paul!'"

The bright head, with its wealth of golden curls, was raised from its resting-place upon his shoulder, and the bewildering eyes gazed into the handsome face bending over her. The crimson lips parted, and the sweet voice murmured, "I shall not forget you, Paul; and I shall not cease to love you!"

"God bless my little pet, my Laughing-Eyes!" And, gathering her yet closer to his breast, he imprinted a kiss upon the crimson lips; then placing the child upon her feet, he turned to leave the arbor.

"One moment, O Dr. Paul, one moment longer, and then I shall let you go!" And catching up a pair of garden shears, which lay upon the low chair, she plead for "only one little curl of his beautiful hair." He held the child in his arms while her soft little hands fluttered amid his hair.

"O, thank you, ever so much!" the child murmured, as she pressed her lips softly upon the silken curl.

"And now, ma petite, I must have one of yours."

"O, do you really want one? Take the longest and prettiest." And shaking her little head, with a cunning toss, the whole mass seemed lying upon Paul's breast. Severing one of the feathery golden ringlets, he held it up in the clear moonlight, and then turning to the child, looked earnestly into her beautiful face, as he said, "When I come again I shall show you this curl, and if my pet loves me, and has kept the curl she has cut from my hair, I shall ask her to be my little wife; but she will not love a rusty old man, such as I shall then be."

"Paul, I promise you I shall always love you, and never forget you." And with one more kiss upon the lips of his child-love, Paul Winship left the arbor.

"Twenty-eight to-day!" muttered Paul Winship, as he paced back and forth in his room; "seven years have I been away from my native land. My old love for the mother has vanished, and in its place has grown a deep and lasting devotion for her child—the bewitching little fairy I bade good-by so long ago. Ah! seven years have changed the

child into a young lady of seventeen." And pausing in his walk, he took a tiny pearl casket from his breast-pocket, and touching a spring, he lifted a glittering golden ringlet from its satin bed, and gazed tenderly, almost yearningly, upon it. "I wonder if my little pet remembers me? I wonder if in all these years she has once thought of her 'dear good Dr. Paul,' her 'own darling Paul!'"

Now the gentleman twined the ringlet softly over his finger, then let it drop, watching it wreath itself into golden folds. "For seven years have I travelled over this continent, and yet, I have not found the beauty and purity here which we find at home. Fair Italy's daughters are very charming—some of Florence very beautiful—but none compare with those of my sunny southern home." And, communing thus with himself, Paul Winship thrust his hat over his brows and strode out in the moonlight. Ah! a moonlight night in Italy, beautiful, bewitching, holding the soul, as it were, entranced!

But Paul's thoughts were elsewhere. He heeded not the many pedestrians; some, like himself, wandering aimlessly about, others walking for pleasure, while the greater number hastened on to some place of amusement. Light rolling vehicles shot past him now and then, but he noticed them not. The picture of his "child-love," as he saw her last, grew upon him; he seemed to hear the birdlike voice as it murmured, "I shall not forget you, Paul, and I shall not cease to love you."

So intent was he upon his own thoughts, that in crossing at one of the street corners he did not notice an open carriage drawn by two wild restive horses, and the warning cry of the driver, "Take care, sir!" came too late. Our Dr. Paul was thrown upon the stones, and in one second the hoofs of the wild animals would have forever shut out the light of life for Paul Winship, had not the gentleman sitting upon the back seat of the open carriage, sprung forward and grasped the reins with a giantlike might.

"Great heavens! is he dead?" exclaimed the lady, by whom the gentleman had been seated.

"No, Florence, thank God, he is only stunned. Give me your *sal volatile*, my love."

The occupants of the carriage had gathered around the prostrate man.

"Chase his hands, my dear. There, that is the way. He begins to move. Here, Laughing-Eyes, hold his head while I run in here and get some water for him."

"Laughing-Eyes!" That name seemed to pierce Paul Winship's dormant soul and bring him back to life again. Slowly the great gray-brown eyes unclosed and gazed into the bright beautiful face of the young girl bending over him.

"Laughing-Eyes!" he murmured, carrying the little hand that rested on his shoulder to his lips.

"Mamma, O little mamma! It is—yes, it is my own Dr. Paul!" And the young girl bent lower over the handsome face resting upon her lap, and met the thrilling heart-gaze fastened upon her lovely face.

"Papa, this gentleman is an old friend of ours, Dr. Paul Winship," cried the girl, as her father came with a pitcher of water.

"Ah, indeed! happy to meet you, my dear sir; though I must confess you have been rather badly treated. Let me assist you, sir, into the carriage." And while speaking, Captain English placed his strong arms about the lithe form of the young man, and raised him upon his feet.

But the pain of one ankle was so great that he could not stand, and with much difficulty he was placed in the carriage. Mrs. English and Laughing-Eyes silently followed, and the carriage was driven rapidly off in an opposite direction from whence he had come. But he asked no questions; he seemed in a happy dream; the fact that his ankle was badly injured and required medical attention, seemed to trouble him but little.

Captain English, in his noble way, had him conveyed to his private boarding-house—for they were spending the winter in Florence—and every care was bestowed upon the young man, of whom he knew nothing, except that he was a friend of his daughter; that was all-sufficient.

And Laughing-Eyes! What happiness was hers to minister to the wants and watch with loving care over her young heart's first and only love. How beautiful, how bewildering she was! The promise of her childhood was fully verified; the beautiful child had become a lovely, fascinating, soul-entrancing girl-woman. Beautiful as a dream of fairy-land,

with eyes so charming that one would fain gaze into their laughing depths forever! So thought Dr. Paul, as, lying upon a low couch by the window, several days after his accident, he watched the graceful form as it flitted about the room, arranging vases of flowers here, and looping a curtain into place there.

"Laughing-Eyes, come to me!" There was a world of passionate pleading in the full rich voice, and it caused a crimson tide to bathe the snowy brow and throat for one moment, as she approached and knelt playfully at his side.

"Does my pet remember her promise to me seven long years ago?" And Paul Winship, with one hand clasped her delicate little fingers in his, while with the other he touched the spring of a tiny pearl casket, and revealed a glittering golden curl. The matchless eyes gazed into his, and, without speaking, she bent forward and unclasped the bracelet encircling the dainty wrist he held captive. Touching a hidden spring there was revealed, as she held it before his eyes, a tiny curl of nut-brown hair, and engraved upon the setting, "My Paul."

Both arms were closely twined about the lovely form, until the beautiful head, with its wealth of golden-brown curls, rested upon his breast, and his lips murmured, passionately, "My love, my pet, my darling, yes, my darling pet!" And he gathered sweetest kisses from the lips resting so temptingly near to his own.

"And my darling has loved me all this long while?" he questioned, after a delicious silence, as he raised the bright head and gazed into the pure sweet face.

"All this while, my Paul; my heart has been yours ever since the cold frosty morning in the long ago, when you went with me to my home and set poor Tom's leg!"

"Blessings on Tom forever!" exclaimed Dr. Paul, as he twined both fair arms of his betrothed about his neck, and kissed again the crimson lips of his Laughing-Eyes, his beautiful child-bride.



**LAURA AND ALFRED.**

Ditson, G L

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pg. 45

**LAURA AND ALFRED.**

BY G. L. DITSON.

Many years ago, in Smyrna, I became acquainted with the wreck of a lovely English girl (lovely I know, for I saw her portrait in her mother's parlor), who was rendered insane by the news of the drowning of her lover. Strange to say, she remembered nothing of the past, save events of her girlhood previous to that fatal night, when, it is supposed, the spirit of her affianced appeared to her. Seated at breakfast with the young lady's mother and brother—having slept in the bed and room once occupied by Lord Byron when a guest of this family—I was startled by her sudden appearance as she returned from one of her harmless rambles, saying, with deep sadness in her expression, "Mother, all the crystals are broken from the trees." She had seen some pieces of glass upon the beach: then, seemed to recall a mournful dream.

Wavelets of music swelling from the sea,  
As if some peri wept, and weeping sung,  
Came to the shore, the sheltering covert lee,  
Where a fair maid—whose tresses wildly hung—  
Beat the waves back with tiny loving feet,  
As her sad heart with sadder pulses beat.

Love that had dayned like morning's luscious light,  
Then flooded her young life with noonday joy,  
Bathing with blissful dreams, precious and bright,  
All her sweet depths of soul, without alloy;  
Hallowed the hopes that did her heart bedeck,  
Strung like the pearls upon her dainty neck.

But why that gaze now? why that eager gaze  
Far o'er the sea yet frowning with a storm?  
Can she not peer through yonder distant haze,  
And catch a glimpse of that long-looked-for form,  
Which, when it sailed and left the sunny shore,  
Bore her betrothed—the loved she'd see no more?

Alfred had told her in a dream one night,  
That through the gloom he'd come to bid her cheer;  
That though his form lay slumbering out of sight,  
He then was near her and she still was dear;  
That if she'd walk where they were wont to be,  
She'd hear his voice in wavelets of the sea.

Laura now wanders daily on that shore,  
With shoeless feet, and neck and bosom bare,  
Listening and weeping, listening evermore,  
To catch that tale of love the waves declare.  
And while she listens—treading soft the lee—  
Hears his sweet voice low, singing in the sea.

Scenes that had swept like phantoms of the night,  
Before the inward vision of the soul—  
Weird as the moonbeam's silvery flickering light,  
Or tropic splendors round the icebound pole—  
Wove their sad spell with threads the Fates had spun,  
And all her life was finished when begun.

Albany, N. Y., March 9th, 1871.

## LEILA'S GOVERNESS

BY M. T. CALDOR.

### CHAPTER I.

"AND now, Mabel, you know all. I have kept it silent and secret these long years, because I would not mar your girlish joy with the sad recital. But a woman's enduring faith has lately dawned in your eyes, and I felt that I could trust you. You see that it is not from a weak desire to gratify a favorite son, that I accept and allow this sacrifice of yours. No, no, my darling. Long have I struggled with myself to allow this generous proposal to be carried into effect. You understand my feelings, do you not, and will not consider me a partial mother, because I consent to your venturing into the rough hard ways of life, to toil for the support of a brother in seeming ease and prosperity at college?"

The tall queenly-looking girl addressed rose from the footstool where she had been sitting at her mother's knee, and with her clear cheeks aglow, and her dark eyes shining lustrous with enthusiasm, answered, warmly:

"Yes, yes, my best and dearest of mothers, I understand you perfectly, and from my heart thank you for your confidence and the privilege of aiding you. I shall work with redoubled ardor, and dear Harry shall have an education that shall fit him to stand unabashed with the proudest in the land. Thank you, thank you a thousand times for telling me this! It has given me new life and

strength. I was proud before of my father's genius, and now—"

She threw back the superbly outlined head, with its glossy wealth of ebon hair, and drew up her graceful form with such a glowing pride of health and beauty, and some other ennobling consciousness, that the pale weary-hearted mother smiled, with a new thrill of admiring love for the brilliant creature, and then came an anxious sigh.

"It is hard, very hard for you, my poor Mabel. It grieves me to think of the trials you may meet. You little know how insolent and unkind the wealthy class can be toward their paid dependents."

A queenly toss of the head, and the girl cried, bravely:

"Let them dare to be insolent to me! Do not paint so darkly, mother dear. I have little fear that I shall awe even my employers by my stateliness and dignity. I shall be prudent, so very prudent you will be exceedingly proud of me, and will never fear to trust me anywhere. Some day, maybe, dear Harry will pay me threefold for my exertions. How grand that will be for us then!"

"Hush, Mabel; do not flatter yourself with this forlorn hope. Remember there may be many new lives between. We must keep it still secret from the world. I have pride enough left not to brook its betrayal here in

London." And the mother's pale cheek caught a faint glow as she glanced around the humble apartment, back to the youthful face before her, so brilliant a transcript of her own lovely but pallid features.

The girl was too eager and happy in her new schemes to heed the anxious wistful glances bestowed upon her, and after kissing lightly the thin white fingers, she bounded across the room, selected one from a pile of newspapers on the little table, and came back to the footstool again.

"See, mamma. I will read it again. It seems just the situation I desire."

"WANTED.—A governess, for a young child, a girl of eight years. No one need apply except with good recommendations of excellent character, thorough education, and refinement of mind and manner. Apply at Grosvenor Square, No. 11, between three and four o'clock."

"Could I ask anything better? Now, dear mother, since we have decided, shall I not go at once? It is a long walk, and I must stop for our worthy rector to write my recommendation, so I shall scarcely reach it at the appointed time."

It was a hard struggle. The poor mother trembled, and her breath came quick and short, till suddenly her eyes filled, and down through the tears slid a rainbow smile, leaving a sweet and holy expression about the faded lips.

"Yes, darling, go at once. It is foolish in me to grieve as if anything but sinfulness can lower your noble nature. Go, my Mabel, and Heaven's and your mother's blessings accompany you."

A fervent kiss and buoyant good-by and she was gone, carrying away with her, it would seem, all the sunshine and cheer for the moment. The door closed behind her, the pale mother leaned back and cried long and quietly.

Mrs. Roscoe was the widow of a highly gifted artist, who died in Italy of a sudden distemper, just when fame and fortune seemed opening a brilliant career before him. The young wife, scarcely of years belonging to womanhood, found herself alone and poor, with two little children, in a foreign land, forsaken and discarded by her own aristocratic relatives. Yet love and pride sustained her through the trying ordeal. Love for her helpless babes, and pride in her gifted husband's memory, which would not allow her to apply for assistance to the friends who had discarded her on that husband's account.

They remained in Italy until the fine promising boy was of age to receive a classical education. Then, collecting her scanty means, Mrs. Roscoe returned with her children to her native England, where, by means of a school for young ladies, she had managed to support the little family comfortably, although very plainly. The only direction where the closest economy was not practised was in the education of her children. No pains or money that could be obtained was spared there, and so, while Harry was busy with his studies at Oxford, Mabel had grown up accomplished and refined, just another such a lovely gifted creature as years before had won the idolatrous love of the artist Roscoe.

Shrouded in her coarse gray shawl and plain straw bonnet, with veil closely drawn across her glowing face, Mabel, after receiving the rector's kindly recommendation, turned toward Grosvenor Square. Her heart did not fail her until after she had pulled the massive silver bell-handle, and through the opening door caught a glimpse of the liveried footman waiting for her name and errand. Then for a moment a sickening faintness made her words inaudible, but catching the meaning from the only one that clearly reached him, the footman said:

"Ah, about the advertisement, I presume," and led the way across the wide hall to a massive mahogany door, which he swung open, announcing, as he did so, "A young woman for the governess's situation."

A confused mass of brilliant colors, glittering crystal and indistinct elegance was swimming before Mabel's eyes. But collecting herself with a great effort, she perceived with new dismay that it was evidently the family sitting-room, and occupied by several people.

A portly lady, robed in glistening silk and a profusion of jewelry, motioned her to come toward the emerald velvet easy-chair where she sat, and Mabel obeyed, gathering courage as she proceeded, although her heart quivered as her eyes rested on that cold calculating face, and met the glance of other eyes, pale blue, and glittering icily, like treacherous steel.

Several questions were asked in reference to capability and accomplishments, and then Mrs. Dinsmore turned to a tall, slim, plain-looking but elegantly attired young lady, who had been surveying with the most ill-bred coolness the pretty face and graceful form of the new-comer.

"What do you think, Adele? Will this

person suit Gilbert's ideas? I am afraid she is rather young," glancing once more searchingly at Mabel's changing face.

The young lady addressed gave a significant turn of just such steel-blue eyes as shone in her mother's florid face toward the sofa, where her brother, a gay young officer, was peeping out admiringly from behind his newspaper.

A cloud lowered the narrow forehead of the mother, and scanning with displeased mistrust every youthful grace before her, she shook her head, quite decided to pronounce poor Mabel incompetent for a governess, when the door unclosed again, and a tall dark man, rather spare, or seemingly so from his unusual height, came sauntering into the room with a wild-eyed little girl clinging to his hand. Mrs. Dinsmore looked annoyed at the interruption, but seeing there was no help for it, said to the new-comer:

"Here is another person, Gilbert, who has applied in answer to the advertisement."

He turned to Mabel instantly with a respectful bow and a pleasant smile, betraying a very white and even set of teeth. The child left him, and going up to Mabel, looked up suspiciously into her face.

The trembling smile she met there, not half concealing a look of pain and distress, or something imperceptible to the others and indefinable to herself, moved the girl's heart. She gave, what Mabel learned afterward, the strange little elf could not be won to bestow upon any of the other members of the family except her guardian, she gave her hand at once into Mabel's, and kissing it lightly turned her weird black eyes towards the gentleman, saying:

"I like her, Papa Gilbert—she may show Leila the naughty book lessons, and I'll try to be good."

He gave a sigh of immense relief, and patted her curly head approvingly.

"So, then, the question is settled. I expected a tempest of passion, a regular typhoon, before this tropic fire-lake, fresh from the hot plains of India, would consent to receive a teacher with common civility. So I am very thankful you have won her over in the commencement."

Mrs. Dinsmore bit her lip, Adele tossed her head, and Horace, the young officer, smiled maliciously, but calm and cool as an iceberg, he whom they had called Gilbert arranged the terms, and himself escorted Mabel to the door.

Like a strange dream it all seemed to her, when she revolved the circumstances again on her sleepless pillow that night, and half frightened half pleased at the oddness of the sensation, Mabel knew not whether to regret or congratulate herself on the result of the undertaking. She longed to know more and discover the truth beneath the outside circumstances, as one feels on opening the new leaves of a romance we suspect beforehand has much within it to excite, possibly grieve and horrify us. But the thought, "for Harry's sake," calmed the tumult and gave her comfort in the assurance that she should be fulfilling a sacred duty, come what would as the result.

## CHAPTER II.

THAT week, as he had suggested, saw Mabel Roscoe established in Grosvenor Square, as the governess of Colonel Welborne's little ward.

Leila was a singular child, violent, exacting and selfish, as the natural consequence of indiscriminating indulgence in India, but beneath the noxious weeds lay a warm generous nature, that won more and more upon Mabel's affection. And so her situation as governess, despite her mother's fears, was a very pleasant one, and Mabel's cheek glowed and her eye sparkled with the innocent gaiety of her heart, especially after the family left London for the summer, and adjourned to their country-seat in the neighboring county. Left alone to nature, and little Leila, and her own thoughts, all was genial and pleasant, her only sorrow that her mother could not share likewise the healthful country air, and that Harry must be denied many of the luxuries familiar to his Oxford associates.

But presently the clouds gathered about her sunny sky. Horace Dinsmore suddenly discovered a great interest in his uncle's East India ward. He brought her bonbons. He waylaid her with glaring pictures and wonderful story-books, and used every artifice to win her confidence. The willful little thing was shy and obstinate for a long time, but at length succumbed.

Then began an endless variety of annoyances for the luckless Mabel. Bouquets for herself accompanied the gilded horses of confectionary for Leila, which were quietly handed over to Leila for her game at ball with Rover the spaniel. Still they were follow

by daintily bound volumes of poems, fresh magazines, charming oil prints, everything of the kind tempting to a girl of her refined tastes. But Mabel did not forget her mother's anxious admonitions, and went quietly and coolly about her duty, without heeding or accepting the veriest trifles. She could not so easily dispose of his presence when he found means to intrude upon their hours of recreation, spend them wherever they might. Even the study itself was not sacred from his intrusion. There was a bold look of admiration on the young officer's face that made Mabel's regal head rise more haughtily still, a familiar freedom in his way of addressing her that made her eye flash indignantly, and when at length he ventured upon open compliments, his presence grew intolerable, and she resolved to appeal to Colonel Welborne. The opportunity soon arrived.

She was sitting in the private garden in a retired arbor one warm afternoon, with Leila fallen fast asleep in her lap, and Rover in as sound a nap curled up at her feet, when Colonel Welborne came slowly down the walk, with his cigar in his mouth and newspaper in his hand. He paused, in smiling admiration of the pretty picture framed in the green vine-setting of the arbor, and by a quick imperative gesture checked Mabel when she would have roused Leila and resigned the seat to him.

"Don't disturb her," he said, softly, sitting down on the grass at her feet. "How sweetly she is sleeping. It is singular what a sudden attachment she formed for you. She has quite forsaken me; but that's the way with the world. Old friends neglected for new. She'll do worse yet, when she grows older."

Mabel looked down at the dark grave face, not at all enlivened by that mocking smile, and answered, indignantly:

"Indeed, she will not do worse. She is growing sweeter and gentler every day, and as for the forsaking, I think it is you who have scarcely remembered her existence."

He smiled at the pique the unconscious girl betrayed in her tone, took another whiff of his cigar, and answered:

"Have I been negligent? I dare say I'm an indolent fellow. But I was delighted to shove the responsibility on to your shoulders. I forgot there was anything left for me to do. She is improving. I am glad to know it. I want her to grow up as good a woman as it is possible to find in these degenerate times, for poor Algeron's sake." And he sighed, look-

ing dreamily into the distance, and Mabel saw his thoughts were afar off, at a gory grave beneath tropic skies, and aware how far away his mind had travelled, she forgot his presence, and murmured, softly:

"How singular he is! What has made him so harsh in his judgment of womankind? Had the man no mother, pray?"

He tossed away his cigar, and with a comical grimace interposed:

"Take care! talking your thoughts aloud is a dangerous habit. I'm still here, and might hear what a graceless fellow you think me. How do you know I am harsh in my judgment of your sex?"

Mabel started and colored.

"I have often noticed it in your conversation."

He smiled, not the ridiculing sardonic smile she often saw about those firm resolute lips, but a genial cheeriness.

"Thank you. Then you have sometimes listened to me?"

The blush deepened, but she said, boldly:

"Certainly, I am often dull enough to listen to all the conversation around me, and draw my own inferences of different persons' characteristics."

"I dare say. Well, I will enlighten you as to mine; your penetration was not in fault. I must acknowledge I never yet met the lady who came anywhere near to the old boyish ideal I set up in the sacred innermost of my heart when I was young and the world was fresh. My veneration for woman has been sadly dealt with since that bygone time."

What a hard weary sigh the tone bore with it! The young girl, pure, enthusiastic and generous, felt the tears rising to her eyes as she faltered:

"But your mother, sir?"

"True, a mother up in heaven may save me yet. I never knew her on earth. She left me a six months' babe. How often have I thought of the pity it was I had not been laid in innocence on her bosom. So much weariness, and sin, and care were saved one."

Mabel was gazing thoughtfully at the sleeping face against her shoulder. Raising her head and meeting his waiting eyes, she said:

"Something bids me forget our mutual positions, and tell you that you are wrong and your theory false. That there are pure, and holy, and lovely women still on earth, one half whose devotion and truth the world can never know."

Her dark eye kindled; a crimson bloom shone on her cheek; truth and enthusiasm spoke plainly in her voice. She looked the ideal she was defending. If he did not think so, his heart must have been sere and cold indeed.

"Do you speak from experience?" he asked, sadly.

"Ay, from the nearest, the closest experience. If you could see and know my mother, sir—"

She paused abruptly, the smile and light faded from her face, and cold formality returned.

"I beg your pardon," she added, in proud humility; "I forgot whom I was addressing. Have you any suggestions in regard to Leila's studies?"

"Pshaw!" ejaculated he, so sharply that Leila stirred in her sleep and imprisoned with her tiny fingers a hand of Mabel's. "I believe you by far my superior. You are young, and earnest, and enthusiastic, and I am old and ennuied. What is there but inferiority on my side, saving, maybe, a few heaps of gold, of little benefit to either of us a cycle hence? Don't come down to formalities. Who knows but you may do me good? Go on, and bring back radiant hope and tender faith to my arid heart if you can." And he lay back upon the green sward with eyes half closed, and a waiting expectant look on his face.

Mabel hesitated a moment, then, with her natural frankness, replied:

"Thank you, sir. I gratefully acknowledge that you have always treated me with as much respect as the noblest lady in the land, and it emboldens me to trust you, and tell you there are others who do not."

A fiery frown lowered the thick black eyebrows, and he darted towards her a glance of swift inquiry.

"Who has dared show disrespect to you? Ah, I see! Believe me, I'll look out that you suffer no further annoyance from that puppy nephew of mine, Miss Roscoe."

Her expressive glance thanked him sufficiently.

"Now go on and tell me about your mother," he said.

She laughed with renewed ease and glee.

"Excuse me, I should never do justice to the theme; but I am sure if you only knew her, your contempt for women would speedily vanish."

"I'm inclined to think it's going now!" he

said, gravely; "but don't imagine I haven't thought I found perfection a dozen times at least. I have always been tumbling headlong in love, but my infatuation was sure to be very brief; the honey turned on my lips into bitterest gall. Why, when I was only twelve years old, I remember being violently enamored, boylike, of a noted beauty, at least a dozen years older than myself; but Lady Gertrude Rochford was a vision of loveliness the first time I saw her, fresh from a presentation at court, where even royalty acknowledged her charming grace."

His listener's eyes were shining; her whole face one glowing picture of surprise and delight.

"O, tell me all about it!" she cried, eagerly; "tell me everything! how she looked; what she said and did! It is so pleasant to hear it described."

Such childish curiosity surprised him, but it was too pretty to wish it overcome, so he repeated the story, adding:

"She, too, fell like a star from the horizon, notwithstanding the brilliant lot we thought before her. I've forgotten the circumstances. I know she was discarded by the family, and banished from London all at once."

The dark eyes were dripping with tears; the red lips trembling and quivering with some unknown agitation.

"Thank you; thanks for this description of her brilliancy and youth. O, man of little faith, never doubt again there are noble women on the earth."

Her vehement tone woke Leila, and the moment she caught sight of Colonel Welborne she cried:

"Ah, papa, Papa Gilbert, are you there! You don't come to see Leila now; but Leila don't care, for she has her own *ma belle*."

"Ma belle, indeed!" he said, good-naturedly, opening his arms, into which Leila sprang with a little scream of delight, while Mabel quietly retreated into the house.

From that day Colonel Welborne was more watchful over the studies of his ward, and Horace suddenly disappeared from the garden haunts of the governess. The very next morning Colonel Welborne entered the schoolroom, saying:

"Miss Roscoe, your attack yesterday actually thawed away some of the ice about my heart. Now it is my turn as mentor. You are too proud and haughty. Why should you deny the drawing-room the sunshine of your smile and the music of your laugh? The few

times I have seen you there you seemed petrified into a marble statue. I call it selfish and uncharitable."

The wise prudent shake of the head she gave seemed to amuse him exceedingly. He laughed immoderately, until her face showed annoyance, and she said, in a formal willful voice:

"I hope you will excuse me, but you are intruding upon my school hours. Leila, bring me your book now."

It was his turn to color. Despite his nonchalance, there was a commanding majesty about the girl that awed him, and bowing confusedly, he retreated at once; while Leila, going on with her lesson, wondered if Mabel were sick or cross, that her mistakes were corrected so sharply.

### CHAPTER III.

An influx of visitors caused a season of gaiety, and somehow it happened, despite her efforts to the contrary, nearly every day found Mabel in the drawing-room, as much to her own annoyance as that of Mrs. Dinsmore and Adele. But one or another of their distinguished visitors was sure to call for Leila, and Colonel Welborne had peremptorily insisted that Miss Roscoe should always accompany her, on the score of watchfulness over her manners.

Once or twice, prompted by nervous maternal anxiety, Mrs. Dinsmore had hinted to her brother how little she relished the presence of that "heedless child and upstart governess" among her guests. But he was exceedingly obtuse, declaring he must insist that his ward received every possible advantage, and if his sister found them too much trouble, he was very sorry, and would try and find another home for them all. Whereupon, panic-stricken at the thought of losing him, and eventually for her children the India fortune, Mrs. Dinsmore apologized eagerly, assuring him it was not on her own account she had spoken, only because she feared some of their aristocratic visitors might feel aggrieved to be obliged to mix with such persons as that Miss Roscoe. Her brother's quiet smile puzzled her exceedingly, but, as usual, he had won to-day; so Mabel was in the midst of a fashionable circle constantly, and with the keen relish of youthful spirits she enjoyed the change, until she began to see the dislike and secret sneers of the haughty Adele and her sympathizing mother.

It was scarcely surprising that Adele objected so strongly, since the brilliant life and warmly-tinted colors of that symmetrical form and lovely face might suggest to her highbred visitors an unpleasant contrast with her own pale spiritless countenance, light blue eyes and angular form. She had a nervous consciousness that even her elegant jewels and charming toilet might fail to outweigh the difference. What made matters more tantalizing, a great prize was hovering just now about her gilded net. A young lord, whose fast diminishing purse scarcely kept his title in appropriate splendor, was seriously thinking of taking desperate steps to remedy the deficiency, and condescending to propose for Mrs. Dinsmore's well-portioned daughter. Both Adele and her mother were obsequious worshippers of titled nobility, and consequently in a flutter of excitement, Lord Lovel was at present an ostensible visitor to join Horace on a shooting excursion, but most of his time was spent in the drawing-room with the ladies. It was an unlucky evening when he first discovered Mabel amid the throng of party visitors.

"Faith, Dinsmore, what gem have you found?" he cried. "That superb creature cannot be the Countess of Eaglewood, yet I never saw another with so brilliant a carriage. Present me at once!"

A light mocking laugh at his elbow arrested his excited encomiums. Miss Adele's eyes flashed like a steel envenomed dagger.

"A countess! Pray, by all means, introduce Lord Lovel to Lella's governess!"

Lord Lovel bit his lips, but had the presence of mind to reply with a little home thrust to set off her sarcasm:

"Ah, indeed! it's astonishing how quickly such people acquire the manners of their superiors. I actually thought her one of the nobility."

Adele was waving her jewelled fan with affectation.

"I believe Miss Roscoe is one of the poorest kind. I know she is generously paid for her services, and yet is obliged to give it all towards the support of a mother and a score of ragged little brothers, for aught I know."

Lord Lovel glanced again at the sparkling face, and mentally ejaculated, with a sigh, "Poor, is she? then what is she to me?"

Nevertheless, throughout the evening, he found occasion to bestow so many admiring glances that way, that at length, pale and vindictive with jealousy, Adele hastened to

find her mother, and whisper, "Will you send that hateful governess away? I will not bear her presence longer. I believe I fairly loathe her!"

Astonished and frightened, Mrs. Dinsmore managed, by a dextrous manoeuvre, to despatch Leila, and of course Mabel, likewise, to her chamber, without exciting her brother's attention.

From that time began for Mabel persecutions and indignities innumerable; doubly irritating, because so covert they gave her no opportunity for complaint or redress. She had rejoiced in being free from Horace since her hints to his uncle, but now he again renewed his attentions more boldly, more insolently than before. It was evident his mother and sister were disposed to cooperate with him, and Mabel's cheek burned, and her pure heart thrilled with horror, as she became aware they had no fears of his entangling himself in marriage, and further than that, did not care to question him. At length, after an encounter with him, of downright insult on young Dinsmore's side, Mabel, in a perfect fever of indignation and distress, presented herself before Colonel Welborne in the library, where he had often secluded himself in company hours, and abruptly tendered her resignation of the situation she held. Surprised and pained, he cast that peculiar penetrating glance of his searching upon her excited haughty face.

"I am deeply grieved, Miss Roscoe," he soon said, respectfully; "this very day I was thinking it was only a simple act of justice to raise your salary, as your devotedness to Leila had so completely removed all anxiety about her education from me. You have been entirely successful, and I fear no one else can fill your place. May I not venture to remonstrate with you, and hope your decision is not irrevocable?"

His tone was so kind, so respectful, so brotherly, her proudly arched lip quivered, but she answered, resolutely, "Indeed, sir, I must go."

He left his chair, and with arms folded behind him, and head drooping thoughtfully, paced the room to and fro. Just then a servant tapped at the door.

"Is Miss Roscoe here? A note was just left for her."

He took the note, brought it to Mabel, and resumed his walk. She tore it open, glanced hastily through it, and burst into tears. It was brief, and ran thus:

"**MABEL DEAREST,**—I have just heard from Harry; the poor boy has met with a sad loss—his best suit of clothes stolen from his room. Dear generous Mabel, how thankful I am you will be able to remedy the loss! Your quarter's salary must soon be due, and although it pains me to deprive you of it, I know you too well to hesitate about it. Harry charges me not to replace his loss with any more of our hard earnings, but you and I know why Harry must not be shabbily clad at Oxford. My own resources have been closely tried, or I should never have appealed to you. Poor child! it seems cruel, yet I know how you will rejoice in the gift. Shall I see you soon?

YOUR MOTHER."

Poor Mabel! just at that moment it did seem hard. What could she do? Alas! for her mother's sake, for Harry's welfare, she must forget pride, she must subdue resentment, and teach herself to bear unkindness patiently. Colonel Welborne had paused, looking anxious and sympathizing.

"Will you not trust me, Miss Roscoe, and tell me the cause of all this grief?" he asked, gently. "I shall be proud to assist or defend you. Confide to me the cause of your trouble."

She had dried her warm drenched cheeks, and looking up into his face with so sweet and touching a grace, he longed to clasp the beautiful head against his breast to shield it from further grief, she answered, sadly:

"Thank you, sir; I appreciate your kindness. I beg your pardon for this disturbance, and I will try to stay."

"But the cause, dear child?" he urged, as kindly as an elder brother might have done.

She grew embarrassed. What should she say? how make known so delicate a subject? Suddenly, with a gush of renewed cheerfulness, she looked up, smiling, in his face.

"Excuse me; I think I have been naughty enough to day. Leila would have been punished by me for such behaviour. I have expected a moral impossibility—that everybody should be as kind, as generous, as noble as—you!" And half laughing half crying she disappeared from the room.

But what a bright genial smile she left there on the good-looking face of the bachelor colonel. What pleasant thought, like a wave of sunshine, had drifted its sparkles over his sober features? And so Mabel did not go. And the next day, from the forbidding scornful looks, the sullen face of Horace and the satisfied triumphant smile of Colonel Welborne, Mabel gathered there had been a

family altercation; and sure enough, that very afternoon Horace set out on a tour through Scotland. Still there was little peace for Mabel. She found even a glance might bring an envenomed arrow, and discovered, to her dismay, that a shrug of the shoulders from Mrs. Dinsmore, or a toss of the head from Adele, had power to disturb her equanimity.

Thus stood affairs, when, to the pride and exultation of the Dinsmores, Lord Lovel announced the expected call of his friend Count Rochford, on his way home from Scotland, to be introduced to them. To have a guest of such august wealth and rank in her own house was almost too overwhelming an honor for Mrs. Dinsmore. Her delight and importance were exceedingly amusing to her brother, and he rallied her rather unmercifully upon the expensive additions made to the household furnishing and the ladies' wardrobe. Mabel heard a great deal of the all-absorbing topic, and seemed to have caught some of the prevalent excitement and perturbation; and when, at length, one fine morning the servant threw open the door of the drawing-room, announcing, pompously, "Count Rochford," her eye glanced as anxiously, and a far brighter flush of excitement glowed on her cheek than on that of Adele.

He was a tall dark-haired man of thirty years, apparently, exceedingly aristocratic in appearance, and notwithstanding his good-natured smile, betraying by his manner the condescending consciousness of his own exalted rank above that of his untitled entertainers. An odd smile wreathed Mabel's lips as he was introduced to all present but herself, while the hostess accounted for the exception by the not very subdued words, "That's only the governess." And not at all humiliated, Mabel lifted her dark eyes full to his heedless glance, and again that light mocking smile, too bitter for those fresh young lips, hovered over her face as the count returned, carelessly, "She has a face like a picture in Rochford Gallery."

Colonel Welborne saw it, and puzzled over its meaning long and unsuccessfully. Later in the evening he found his way to her side, and asked, "Have you met Count Rochford before, Miss Roscoe?"

She winced uneasily beneath his eyes more than his words, but answered, instantly, "Never, sir; that I remember."

"What, then, have you heard of him, that you cherish animosity against the unfortunate nobleman? Your eyes sparkle when

they rest on him, as I have seen a kitten's watching the flutterings of a bird she longs to tear in pieces."

She colored painfully. "I was not aware of it. Am I so wicked as that! although, to be sure, he stands in my light. Don't you see how his broad shoulders intercept my view of that pretty Miss C. at the piano?"

He was baffled, not satisfied, and relinquished the subject. Throughout Rochford's visit Mabel was strangely vacillating and eccentric. Now brilliant, gay and haughty as a princess, to the occasional admirers she found amid the throng of visitors, and again sad, dejected and humble to an almost painful degree. Colonel Welborne was watching closely every movement of hers.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE summer days wore away. The family returned to town, and Lord Lovel still was a frequent visitor at the house. Adele had learned to blush consciously the moment his smooth voice echoed in the hall, but still there came no formal declaration, which that amiable young lady informed her mother was solely owing "to the airs and intrigues of that doll-faced governess," upon whom she visited, in consequence, a double portion of spite and scorn. At last she chanced upon a discovery that filled her envious heart with exultation.

One day when Lord Lovel, who still persisted in his civility, had handed Mabel a roll of music that slipped from her hand to the carpet, Adele conceived the absurd idea that his lordship had also passed a note with the music, and after his departure, while Mabel was out with Leila for a walk, she worked herself into such a furious storm of jealousy, that, setting all honor and propriety at defiance, she proceeded on a search for such incendiary documents into Mabel's private chamber. Excited and triumphant, she came out and rushed at once to her mother's dressing-room, startling that worthy lady from a sound nap, by the exclamation:

"There! what did I always say of her? I knew she was a low artful creature, but I never thought of accusing her of theft. See what I found, locked away out of sight in a little box that one of my keys fitted. Now, Uncle Gilbert may help her if he can. March she shall! I'm going for an officer to arrest her at once for theft." And on this gentle errand the fair Adele was hurrying away when checked by her mother's decisive voice:

"Stay a moment, Adele. I haven't understood a word you said. What has she done?"

Adele paused, held up a twisted hoop of gold, surmounted by a shield formed of the Rochford crest in diamonds, and repeated:

"I found it in her room, I say. She must have stolen it when the count was with us in the country."

"Perhaps he has given it to her," suggested the bewildered mother, doubtfully.

"Given it to her!" laughed Adele, scornfully. "The aristocratic Count Rochford give his family crest in diamonds to a governess! It is preposterous!" And then, laughing loudly with wicked glee, she said, "Ah, I have planned it now! I'll have a glorious revenge! Lord Lovel is coming with that book this afternoon. Uncle Gilbert will be in the drawing-room too, because Horace has returned. And before them all I'll show the ring, and expose her guilt. Robert shall have a policeman to take her away. What a splendid scene it will be!" And Adele's sallow cheek glowed, and her pale eye sparkled with the anticipated triumph.

Innocent and unsuspecting, that afternoon Mabel arranged Lella's ringlets and obeyed the summons to the drawing-room. Lord Lovel was there, Colonel Welborne, and, to her surprise, Horace also, all busy in conversation. Adele looked so unusually brilliant and elated, that Mabel soliloquized at once, "So his lordship has at last proposed," and was passing to her accustomed seat in the bay-window, when, to the surprise of all, Adele stepped before her, and holding up the ring, said, in a raised triumphant voice:

"I beg to detain you one moment, Miss Roscoe, long enough to inquire how this valuable ring came into your possession."

One swift searching glance into the cruel exultant face showed Mabel the whole. Her full red lip curled in scorn, and the indignant blood dyed cheek and forehead, as she said:

"I might question your right, Miss Dinsmore, to invade my private locks. Let it pass though, while I answer you at once. I do not choose to tell anything about the ring, and would thank you to return it to me this moment."

Turning to the wondering lookers-on, Adele laughed mockingly. "Do you hear the girl? Return it, indeed! I think I never heard a thief so bold."

"Thief!" came rushing from Mabel's lips, leaving them white with anger. "How dare you insult me so, Miss Dinsmore?"

Again rang out the scornful laugh. "How dare I? Certainly, it is wonderful how Adele Dinsmore dares speak any but obsequious words to a governess of her mother's house. But these good people can see Count Rochford's coat of arms on the ring here, and are all aware that that noble gentleman was lately a guest where your ladyship worked for pay. My temerity is almost as wonderful as the fact of a governess allowing diamonds to lie idle in her casket. Perhaps you are equally indignant to know that an officer waits without, and Count Rochford has been sent for."

Horrified and dismayed, as much at the exhibition of such hideous exultation on Adele's part at the discovery of the ring, poor Mabel cast her eyes appealingly around the startled group. She read the belief of her guilt in every face she scanned. Colonel Welborne's countenance was concealed from her. He was bending down, busily writing with his pencil on a scrap of paper. A keen pang shot through her heart. Had he, who had hitherto protected her, deserted her in this hour of sorest need? Count Rochford had been sent for. What could she say? How account for the possession of such a ring? She looked pitifully once more at the bowed head, and then, with a powerful effort of pride and strength, conquered her agitation, and determined to face all bravely.

A silence ensued. Adele stood before her, but Mabel's eyes were on the floor. Then Colonel Welborne stepped between, and Mabel felt a coil of paper thrust into her hand, while he was ostensibly examining the ring. A bright color, like sunset, reflected on the statue of snow, and glowed a moment on her face, as she read:

"Will you marry me? I have loved you from the moment you entered the house till now. My wife can soon shame this headstrong accusing girl." W."

"He pities me—Heaven bless him! And his generous heart would call it love," thought Mabel. And with hands growing chill and damp, she found her pencil and wrote on the other side, "Thank you for your kindness, but I cannot marry you." And before them all handed it back to him.

A dark red flush crossed his face, his strong hand trembled a little in his grasp—then he was calm again, and said, coolly:

"Well, Adele, that was certainly Count Rochford's ring once. Does it follow that he may not have bestowed it as a gift? I hope

Miss Roscoe will pardon your unlady-like suspicions."

"A great many marvellous things will happen when the count bestows diamonds upon a governess," retorted Adele. "I expected you would be hard to convince, Uncle Gilbert. The count himself will shortly settle the matter. What does his lordship say?"

"Circumstances are very much against her," replied Lord Lovel, cautiously.

"I haven't a doubt of her guilt," repeated Horace and Mrs. Dinsmore, simultaneously.

Then the messenger Miss Dinsmore had sent away returned. His face showed startling tidings. "I have just returned," said he, "from Count Rochford's rooms in — Square. His lordship has been at Derby a week or more, but this morning a despatch was received announcing his instant death by a fall from his horse."

The news came like a shock of electricity, paralyzing all; Lord Lovel's face grew pale, Adele dropped the ring with suddenly unnerved fingers, and Colonel Welborne turned his eyes hastily to Mabel. To his astonishment the haughty head had dropped into the clasping hands, and tears were pouring in torrents through the slender fingers.

In another moment, Horace, who was at the window, exclaimed, "What the deuce did the fellow mean? Here's the Rochford carriage at the door."

How breathlessly waited the little group, as the pealing bell was answered, and echoing steps approached the door! How every eye dilated as the footman's voice announced once more, "Count Rochford!"

Count Rochford! It was a slender boyish form, clothed in the deepest mourning—not the stout man they had welcomed there before. Lord Lovel was the first to comprehend the mystery. Bowing courteously to the new-comer, he said, "The new Count Rochford, I presume, my lamented friend's successor?"

A graceful bow of acquiescence in return, and Count Rochford gazed inquiringly around the excited group.

"Mabel," said he, "you understand it all, do you not? You know what has happened? We were busy proving my identity, or I should have called for you before."

She drew away her hands, sprang towards him, and resting her head on his shoulder, sobbed as if her heart would break. He

threw his arm protectingly around her.

"I do not understand these strange looks, my darling sister. Has any one dared to grieve you? Nay, nay, Mabel, wipe away those tears, and give these good people a kindly invitation to pay us a visit at Rochford Castle, after the mourning days for our deceased cousin have expired."

What a picture of baffled malice, of mortification and rage, was Adele's changing countenance! How crestfallen and insignificant looked Mrs. Dinsmore and her worthy son! Now was Mabel's hour of triumph. She wiped away her tears, and taking up the cause of all the mischief, said:

"Here, Harry, is the ring our grandfather, Count Rochford, gave mamma the night of her presentation at court. Colonel Welborne has eloquently described her youthful loveliness to me. Miss Dinsmore, will not, I presume, question further my right to wear the Rochford crest in gold or diamonds either, when I inform her that Lady Gertrude Rochford, who married Gervaise Roseoe the artist, is my mother, and the late Count Rochford's only sister."

She paused and hesitated, while a charming blush swept across her expressive face, as she turned to where Colonel Welborne, amazed, and a little grieved, too, stood silently observing all that passed.

"May I be allowed the privilege of erasing a word of that little note, Colonel Welborne?"

Bowing gravely, he passed it into her hands. But when his eye followed her gliding pencil, a sudden shining light kindled in his earnest eye, and around his firm-set mouth.

"Is it possible?" he asked, tremulously arresting the snowy fingers, for he read there, "Thank you for your kindness, and I will marry you."

"Everything is possible," she answered, gayly, to hide the happy smile upon her lips. "I would not accept pity, but now—"

The sentence was unfinished, yet its completion may be guessed when I tell you that only a few months passed away before Colonel Welborne married the governess, and what was more wonderful, there was a magnificent fete given them at Rochford Castle. Poor Adele lost the glory of sharing the feast, and she lost likewise the visits of Lord Lovel, who has ever since been noted for his attention and gallantry to governesses.

# LIFE'S CHANGES.

Meade, Fanny H

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## LIFE'S CHANGES.

BY FANNY H. MEADE.

I AM sitting in the dim and solemn twilight, gazing into the glowing embers, and dreaming over my life in the years that are gone. The joys and sorrows alike are all past. Without, the cold winter wind is wailing a mournful requiem; and as I listen to its wild music, it bears my thoughts away upon its pinions to a quiet grave in a snow-clad churchyard. Thick and fast come the many memories of him who lies so peaceful and silent beneath that mound of earth; while my burning tears flow unchecked. But, from my heart, arises a prayer of sincere thankfulness for the calm which has at last fallen upon my life, and although its dearest joys have been taken from me, I look beyond and above, to a reunion on the other side of the dark valley of shadows.

Lest an orphan at the age of sixteen, I was compelled to labor for my own maintenance, which was at first accomplished by sewing; this failing, I was so fortunate as to obtain the position of assistant bookkeeper in a large dry goods establishment, for which position I had fully qualified myself.

The proprietor was Mr. Henry Morton, a widower with an only son, Raymond, whose path in life was, for a time, closely interwoven with mine. During the time I was in Mr. Morton's employ, Raymond and I were much in each other's society. Together we pored over the long accounts, gaining daily a deeper insight into each other's character, and, as may easily be supposed, learning also a lesson in love. Six happy months had scarcely sped before we were betrothed.

Life now seemed one delirious dream of happiness. What countless castles were built, only to vanish into thin air! And yet, gazing through the long vista of years back upon those halcyon days, it seems as if the brightest hours of my life were concentrated in that one brief year.

Strange as it may appear, our affection had never been observed by Mr. Morton. Usually, he was a stern man, of few words; but from the time we first met, his kindness had been uniform, his manner ever gentle and respectful, and although we seldom engaged in conversation, he had ever a pleasant word or smile for me.

Hitherto I had paid but little attention to the adornment of my person; but now it became a study, to render myself more pleasing in the eyes of Raymond. Gradually the revelation dawned upon me that I was fast becoming a beautiful woman. No vanity mingled with the thought, for I prized the dangerous gift only for my love's sake. My eyes and hair were dark as the sable vesture of the night; my complexion was a creamy olive, usually devoid of color, save the vivid scarlet of the lips, but when under the influence of any emotion, a rich tide of crimson would surge into my cheeks, dyeing them with the deepest tint, and adding new brilliancy to my eyes. I was rather above the medium height, but slight and graceful.

In everything was Raymond the reverse. With complexion and features of almost feminine delicacy, he had at times a peculiar way of compressing his curved lips into a thin straight line, which gave a firm and unyielding expression to his beautiful face, and changed at once the youth into an almost unapproachable man. Yet, unaccountable as it may appear, I loved him best when this mood was upon him; it seemed more akin to my own wild nature, and I have watched him unobserved for hours, until my eyes grew dim with unshed tears at the thought that something unforeseen might rob me of my treasure. My every thought and wish were concentrated in this one object; yet I neither expected nor wished for the same idolatry in return; and even had Raymond hated me I believe I must have gone on loving him as before.

Although Raymond had arrived at the years of manhood, he had never been given an interest in the business, and dared not take the responsibility of a wife without consulting his father's wishes. One morning we had been conversing together about our future; we had both decided that the fact of our engagement should be mentioned to Mr. Morton, when the door opened and he stood before us. Something in the expression of our faces must have revealed the state of affairs, for he glanced quickly from one to the other, as if doubting his sense of sight; then a frown darkened his brow, and turning to

my accounts, he, for the first time, spoke harshly to me, reproving me severely for some imaginary carelessness.

I watched the hard fierce look steal over my darling's face, and trembled as that glance was turned upon his father who quailed beneath it, as if fearing the demon he had aroused. Drawing up his tall manly form, for a moment he dared not trust himself to speak; but at length exclaimed, in a voice full of suppressed passion:

"No man living, nor not even my own father, shall dare address such words to Mildred Floyd! In me she has found a protector, and for the future those only who are *her* friends, are *mine*. I intended to seek your consent to our union, but now consider it unnecessary."

"Since," said Mr. Morton, with a derisive smile and bow, "my permission is unasked, it would be superfluous to give it; allow me to offer my congratulations. Raymond, if you can spare me a few moments, I wish to converse with you." And together they entered the inner office, closing the door, and leaving me alone.

They remained closeted for more than an hour, and when they again emerged, Raymond's whole attitude and expression were one of deep dejection, while his father appeared smiling and triumphant. What passed during that interview I only knew long afterwards, but from that hour I date all the misfortune and misery which followed. That evening while walking home, Raymond told me I must try and reconcile myself to a separation for a brief period. His father, although offering no objection to our union, considered us both too young to know *our* own minds, and proposed testing our love by absence. In compliance with his wishes, Raymond had determined to battle with the world for himself, trusting, if favored by fortune, to be enabled soon to claim me for his bride. He spoke hopefully of the happiness in store for us, but although making every effort to cheer me, it was plain that the trial would be equally hard for both.

I listened in silence to his words, offering no remonstrance, for I knew the decree was irrevocable; but the anguish of the thought no words can portray. I had a strange presentiment of coming evil, and felt that if he left me he would be lost to me forever.

Must I so soon be deprived of the one treasure of my existence, I who had been so friendless, must I lose the one true friend so

lately found? O, it was hard, so hard to bear! Day and night my thoughts dwelt upon the coming separation, and although I strove to assume my usual cheerfulness, the struggle was fast telling upon my health, as was evident from the paleness of my cheek, and my dull lustreless eyes.

I know that Mr. Morton observed this, for at times I caught him watching me with a troubled expression, but if I for a moment indulged in a delusive hope that he would relent, I was sadly mistaken.

The days passed quickly, O, so quickly away! No longing of mine could stop the rapid flight of time. At length the hour came—we parted—and I was once more alone in the world. Raymond's destination was St. Louis, and for some time his long and loving letters were a constant source of happiness; but when a year had passed, they became almost imperceptibly briefer and more cold. For a time I would not admit even to myself that there could be any change, but at length, to my utter dismay, they ceased altogether. Still I continued writing, humbling myself to ask in what I had offended, and at length demanding an explanation as my right. But entreaties and commands were alike unavailing; no word did I receive, until, no longer able to bear the suspense, I communicated the fact to Mr. Morton, asking him for some tidings of Raymond.

He listened quietly to my recital, and although apparently deeply sympathizing with me, there yet lurked in his eye a quiet gleam of satisfaction. For a time he seemed reluctant to communicate anything concerning his son; but at last, yielding to my entreaties, he told me he had that day received a letter informing him of his intended marriage with a wealthy heiress. For a moment I stood gazing sternly into his face; then everything mingled in confusion before my eyes, and I sank unconscious to the floor. When I awoke from my deathlike stupor Mr. Morton was bending over me, endeavoring by every means in his power to restore me to consciousness, and as I slowly opened my eyes he uttered, fervently, "Thank God! my darling, you are alive. I thought I had killed you!"

I gazed vacantly at him; then seeing my weak attempt to move, he lifted me tenderly in his arms, and placing a chair, left me for a moment, while he procured a cab and accompanied me to my lodging.

At the door he asked forgiveness for his share in my misery.

"Believe me," he said, "I could never have told you the truth, had I dreamed of its effects upon you. Learn to forget him; he is no longer worthy of your regard." Then, clasping my hands in his, he bent and pressed them to his lips, saying, "Mildred, though you are not to be my daughter, I cannot give you up, but must still love you."

I thought little of his words or acts at the time, my whole mind was so completely absorbed in my own misery.

Entering my room and firmly closing the door, I unlocked my desk, and taking from it all the carefully-treasured letters, placed them in a heap upon the hearth, and touching them with a lighted match, watched them slowly burn to ashes; then taking from my bosom the locket containing his image, I threw it on the floor, intending to crush it beneath my feet; but as it struck, the spring flew open, revealing the handsome face within, smiling up at me from its lovely resting-place; could those honest eyes looking so fearlessly into mine be but the guise of deceit? Never, never, could I believe it; and snatching it up hastily, I showered kisses upon the picture's face. How could I destroy the semblance of him I had loved so passionately?

For a month I lay prostrate with brain fever, the death angel waving her white pinions over my burning brow; but I was spared to live. O, why could I not then die? Why did I survive to drag out a miserable existence?

During my illness, Mr. Morton had done all in human power to effect my restoration. The best nurse and medical attendance that money could procure were obtained for me, and during my convalescence he called daily, showering upon me every luxury the most fastidious taste could desire. I was not unmindful of such kindness; my lightest wish was his command, and for all this, a smile, or simple "Thank you," was all he appeared to wish for. The summer verdure was beginning to deepen into the rich autumnal tints, before it was deemed advisable for me to leave my apartment, and Mr. Morton, with his usual care and thoughtfulness, decided that a drive into the open country would be the pleasantest way of again introducing me to the outer world.

Do not imagine that I received all these attentions willingly; far from it. I had

learned, it is true, to regard Mr. Morton something in the light of a father, but now that I knew that the relationship would never exist, my debt of gratitude became oppressive. How was it in my power ever to repay his unfailing kindness? I was leaning back amid the soft cushions gazing upon the lovely landscape before me, when I gave expression to my thoughts.

"Mr. Morton!" I suddenly exclaimed, "I have been vainly endeavoring to discover why you shower so many favors upon me. What have I done to deserve it? and how can I ever repay you?"

He laughed pleasantly, saying:

"Do not trouble your mind with such thoughts; you deserve more than I can give, and as for repaying me, little one, a word I intend to ask you to say will amply reward me for all."

"One word," I asked, in surprise, "what can it be that you place so high a value upon?"

"Mildred," he said, "I first learned to love you as a daughter, but when I could no longer look upon you in that light, I still continued loving you, until you have become the dearest object in life to me. I am not yet an old man, but still in my prime. Will you marry me? The one word I ask of you is to say 'Yes,' and my whole aim in life will be to make you happy."

He took my hands in his, and looked into my eyes waiting for an answer, as if his life depended upon it. For a moment I was so utterly amazed, that I was speechless. Then the truth all flashed upon me. What was life to me now? Why not make him happy if I could? He was Raymond's father; my duty was clearly to accept him; so I uttered the desired "Yes," but added:

"Love I have none to bestow, but if you can be content with respect, I will strive to be a faithful wife."

"It is all I dare ask," he replied, sadly. And folding me in his arms, he impressed a kiss of betrothal upon my brow.

Mr. Morton pleaded that our marriage should take place immediately, and there being no friends' or relations' consent to obtain, I could offer no excuse for delay. Having given him my promise, the sooner it was fulfilled the better. I dared not trust myself to think of the future, which seemed to stretch before me as a wide trackless desert, with no brightness to cheer the gloom. It required but a short time to make all the

necessary preparations, and in one month from the day of our engagement I became his wife.

I pass over the first year of our wedded life. During all that time my husband strove by every art to awaken a reciprocal attachment; patiently and kindly he bore with my willfulness and caprice, gratifying, and often anticipating, my wishes; yet I treated him with studied coldness. I knew he loved me better than his own life, yet I seemed to have become morbidly selfish, and many a bitter tear was shed in sincere and heartfelt pity for my own fancied woes; while the promise I had made to strive to be a good and faithful wife was utterly ignored. I forgot that it was sinful to permit my thoughts to wander after the unattainable, placing the peace and happiness of my husband at stake, until aroused to its reality by a change in his manner towards me. Growing weary at length of making constant yet unavailing efforts to win my regard, and stung to resentment by some unusually bitter words of mine, he heaped upon me such a torrent of reproaches that I quailed beneath them, and finally bidding me farewell, vowed never again to look upon my face until I humbled myself to ask for his return.

A week from that day, I read with mingled feelings of consternation—and shall I call it, grief?—the announcement of his departure for England, while I obtained information from a friend of an ample provision which he had made for my support.

I now for the first time became fully aware that I was not, and never could again become, indifferent to my husband. When I fully realized this, how shall I describe the agony of remorse I endured! My past trials seemed as nothing in comparison with the present; they had been exaggerated by permitting my thoughts to dwell so constantly upon them, but this was no fancied woe. I had driven to desperation, by my heartless conduct, him, whom I had sworn at the altar to love and obey. How had I kept that sacred vow? I, who had never, even in the smallest things, studied his comfort or happiness! It was indeed a just retribution, and to discover all this now that it was too late—too late! “O, saddest of all sad words,” when we feel that our own act has placed reparation beyond our power.

How gladly would I have now welcomed him to heart and home; but it was simply impossible, and I knew it but too well, for

to no one had he confided his destination. Three weary months rolled by, when one morning I was summoned to see a gentleman who refused to give his name. For a moment before entering, my heart throbbed so violently that I was obliged to pause, to try and regain my composure. Perhaps—dare I indulge the hope that the wanderer had returned, relenting his harshness to his wife? At the thought, a blush of pleasure suffused my face, and I was fully prepared to entreat his forgiveness, when, raising my eyes, I stood face to face with Raymond. Eagerly he caught my hand, and looked into my eyes for a welcome, but the word of greeting died upon my lips, for the disappointment and surprise were almost greater than I could bear. I had hoped to meet his father, and instead, here was my supposed faithless lover, gazing at me with the old fond look in his eyes. Was I not glad he had come? This was the last test needed, to prove my love for my husband; and while gazing upon the beautiful face before me, I was amazed to find how utterly indifferent I had grown, and how entirely the new love had crowded out the old.

After waiting in vain for me to speak, Raymond at length broke the silence by exclaiming:

“Mildred, I had hoped for something different than this from you! True, I have heard of your faithlessness, but could not believe myself forgotten, until convinced by my own eyes.”

“Not forgotten, Raymond,” I said, softly, “only our paths in life have been so completely sundered, that we can never be to each other what we once were; but though the past must bury its dead, we can still, I trust, be firm friends, and happier, perhaps, in that relationship than any we once hoped to hold.”

“Be it so,” he said, sadly; “but I cannot understand what could have induced one of your passionate nature so readily to give me up; for that you once loved me, Mildred, you cannot deny, although I have just learned that my father (as I must still call him) has become the happy possessor of your hand.”

“You speak,” I exclaimed, becoming more and more perplexed, “as if I alone were to blame! Have you nothing with which to reproach yourself? Would I have given you up, if you had not first proved false to me?”

“I?” he said, fiercely. “Who dared say

I was ever false?" And in his look and tone I read his perfect truthfulness.

For a moment I was too bewildered to speak. Where was this all to end? Could I believe in the perfidy of my husband, him whom I had just learned to trust so implicitly? Was there no truth to be found anywhere? And to whom should I look for aid? But determined at least to know all, I asked and received from Raymond an explanation.

For some time he had received letters from me, but they suddenly ceased, and although he still continued writing, he received no answer in return. At length my apparent coldness was accounted for by the news of my marriage; but up to the time of his return home, he had not known even the name of my husband. On the morning of the announcement of our engagement, Mr. Morton had disclosed to him his true relationship, which was that of step-son, Mr. Morton having married Raymond's mother when he was but a year old. And having promised her on her deathbed, to bring him up as his own son, faithfully had he kept his promise, until meeting with me; and even then, although sending him from me, he had aided him by money and influence to obtain the position he now held, which was one of comparative affluence. Raymond's true name was Carlyle, but he was still called by that of Morton, in compliance with my husband's wish.

I listened quietly to his recital, inwardly filled with grief and dismay, but outwardly betraying no emotion; for I was determined that I would never betray my husband's share in this separation. I bore his name, and he should never be humiliated by me in the eyes of any human being. In my heart I could not doubt his guilt, yet better, far better, that Raymond should deem me alone to blame; for was not I the cause of this one disgraceful act in his life, and had I not a right to be the sufferer? For in all else I knew him to be true, and doubted not he had fully atoned for all the past.

I told Raymond of Mr. Morton's absence, but did not reveal the cause; and after a few hours friendly converse he bade me adieu, not, he said, to meet me again, until he could do so with perfect calmness; which I most earnestly prayed he might be able soon to do.

After his departure I sat a while in deep dejection, and almost doubted the wisdom of Providence in permitting me to remain so

long upon the earth, I, who seemed destined, not only to render myself miserable, but all whom I loved best.

For Raymond I looked forward to brighter days. He was young, and knowing the hopelessness of loving me, he would in time find happiness with some one more worthy. But for my husband my fears were great; and gladly would I have laid down my life to promote his welfare, for with all his faults I loved him fervently. Now, thinking of him with this weight of guilt upon his conscience, I longed to tell him how freely I forgave him, and win him back to peace.

That night I prayed long and fervently for him, and as if in answer to my prayer, the next morning a telegram was placed in my hand bidding me hasten with all speed to N\_\_\_\_\_, if I would see him alive. You may readily believe I lost no time in preparing for my journey, though my heart misgave me, and I feared I should find him dead, as the place was in a distant State, and it would take days of travel before I could reach my destination.

Time flew by on leaden wings; worn out with fatigue and anxiety, I reached the hotel where my husband was, and there learned from the attending physician, that he had but just returned from abroad, and was journeying in the cars on his way home, when a frightful collision took place. Many were killed, and he was among the hopelessly wounded. His skull was severely fractured, and he had lain unconscious since the accident; but fortunately some one had recognized him, and had sent with all despatch for me. Anxiously I watched by his bedside, hoping against hope for some sign of returning consciousness, scarcely giving myself time for needed repose. At length, after many long days and nights, his heavy lids opened, and he gazed into my face with a look of recognition.

"Milly," he said, faintly, "forgive."

"As I hope for forgiveness," I answered, fervently, throwing my arms around him. And with a peaceful happy smile upon his lips he fell asleep.

For an hour I remained unmoved, fearing to arouse him from that deathlike slumber; then, the fluttering heart ceased to throb, the breath came fainter and fainter from those pale lips, until, with a long-drawn sigh, the imprisoned soul, freed from its earthly prison, soared upwards to the realms above, and I knew it was all over.

I cannot speak of the time that followed, even now, after the lapse of many years. It seems to me only like an uneasy dream. Raymond came to me, and was all that I could wish, relieving me of all thought or care concerning the arrangement of affairs. I found myself possessor of my husband's wealth, he having left a will before his departure, bequeathing all to me.

Raymond would listen to no proposal of sharing it with him, declaring he had more than enough for all his wants, and indeed it so proved; for a short time after, a wealthy paternal uncle died, leaving no heir to his immense fortune, and Raymond, having learned the fact through inquiries made by the press, for any bearing relationship to the deceased Mr. Carlyle, and having proved his claim through papers found among those of my husband's, became at once the envied possessor of thousands.

Of course, for a long time Raymond never broached the subject which I knew was uppermost in his mind. He fancied that I had not truly loved Mr. Morton, and that we might yet be united; but this I felt could never be; my heart lay buried deep down with my dead, and although in reality four years Raymond's junior, sorrow had made me old, and I knew it would be kinder in the end to deny him, than live as his wife, different in every thought and sentiment, with no bond of sympathy existing between us. Yet I dreaded to inflict the pain of a refusal, and strove to avoid it by my actions; but that was impossible. Again he besought me to share his lot, but firmly, yet kindly, I made him under-

stand that it could never be; and for the third time we parted.

Ten years have passed. Although Raymond and I constantly corresponded and frequently met, I had almost renounced the hope of ever seeing him happy with another; yet to-day, I hold in my hand the announcement of that for which I have so long prayed. A new idol is at length enshrined in his heart, whose loveliness and purity by far outshine the first. Often have I listened to the praise of her noble deeds of benevolence, and the casket of her soul is in every way worthy of the gem it enshrines.

One week from to-day I shall see the blue-eyed Alice Granger united to Raymond Carlyle, and in so doing shall also behold the consummation of my dearest earthly wish.

I feel that my pilgrimage is fast drawing to a close. I am happy in the thought that the last years of my life have been devoted to feeble efforts to lighten the burden of others. Freely have money and time been spent in the service; and I know my husband would not have wished it otherwise. It is only lately that I have trusted myself to look over his private papers, and among them found an old journal, kept during his absence, replete with self-recriminations for his past. On the last page, urged, it would seem, by a presentiment of coming evil, he had written a full account of all—asking for pardon should it ever fall into my hands. An earnest prayer was breathed that he might be enabled to make reparation. And he mentioned his determination to start that day for the home which he was never destined to reach.